

Marco Island City Council Candidates 2026

By Sandy Parker | Sparker's Soapbox | Published 2026-09-26

A downloadable, printable PDF of this post is available [here](#).

Six candidates are competing for three at-large seats on the Marco Island City Council in the Nov. 3, 2026, general election: Jason Bailey, Dennis Bartolucci, Darrin Palumbo, Chris Ricci, Teri Sommerfeld, and Rick Woodworth. Darrin Palumbo, current council chairman, is seeking a second term; the other five are newcomers.

The race is nonpartisan; all registered Marco Island voters may vote for three candidates in the race. The three candidates who receive the most votes will each serve a four-year term on the seven-member council.

In this post, I summarize the candidates' backgrounds, priorities, campaign endorsements, recent news coverage, and more, to help voters prepare to cast their ballots. In addition, I summarize some of their responses to my candidate questionnaire; I encourage you to read their complete responses by clicking the links provided.

- [Jason Bailey](#)
- [Dennis Bartolucci](#)
- [Darrin Palumbo](#)
- [Chris Ricci](#)
- [Teri Sommerfeld](#)
- [Rick Woodworth](#)
- [Campaign Finances](#)

Jason Bailey

Jason Bailey has an Associate in Arts degree from Eastern Florida State College. After two years with Softrim Corporation (networking, IT management, remote computing), four years as the owner of Premier Outdoor Services (management, customer service, landscape and irrigation contracting), and nine years as the owner of Allied Paver Systems (management, scheduling, operations, sales, HR), in 2013, he joined and subsequently became a partner at FCI Homes, a Marco Island homebuilding company. He has lived on Marco Island for nearly 30 years and is a Florida-licensed Certified Building Contractor. ([campaign website](#); [LinkedIn](#))

Bailey serves on the Marco Island Planning Board, currently in his eighth year of service and fifth year as the chair. He also served on the city's Parking Solutions Committee from 2017 to 2019 and was a board member of Island Montessori Academy from 2012 to 2019. ([campaign website](#); [candidate questionnaire](#))

Platform

Bailey's [campaign website](#) names three core priorities:

- Protecting Marco's Character, which it says includes fiscal responsibility; infrastructure & long-term planning; efficient, responsive city government; fact-based decision making; protecting our [sic] quality of life; and responsible growth & development.
- Providing Effective Leadership
- Being a Diligent Steward of City Resources

According to his [candidate questionnaire](#), his top priorities if elected would be:

- "Strengthening City processes – Improve the 'How Can We Help' Culture at the City and work on plans to capture institutional knowledge for staff nearing retirement"
- "Ensuring Council has current, reliable data for decision-making – complete an updated Level of Service report, a redone 2026 traffic study, a completed density study and more"
- "Revisit Boards and Committees – establish clearer goals and establish recommended minimum standards for applicants. Establish regular workshops with Council to improve effectiveness"

A City Council decision he disagreed with in the last four years was "the 8 years of rollback in our millage rates. We should have had more debate about this in the last 2-3 years and we should have had more thoughtful conversations about our true budget needs for upkeep, maintenance and replacement of City resources as well as ensuring we have appropriate reserves.... I'm committed to working with the other members of Council to better define our desired levels of service and the costs to maintain them." ([candidate questionnaire](#))

A decision he supported and wants to see continued was Council's 2023 support for "the acquisition of several parcels through the Conservation Collier Program.... There are two 'A' ranked parcels on the active acquisition list and I would encourage Council to support these acquisitions. I would strongly encourage our Council to actively help identify additional parcels and to advocate for additional acquisitions in the future." ([candidate questionnaire](#))

Endorsements

Bailey's [campaign website](#) and/or [candidate questionnaire](#) lists endorsements from State Representative Yvette Benarroch (Florida House District 81), City Councilors Tamara Goehler, Deb Henry, and Rene Champagne, and eight additional community members. ([candidate questionnaire](#))

In the News

No news coverage of Bailey was found as of Sept. 25, 2026.

Further Research

- [Campaign website](#)
 - [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Sparkers's Soapbox Candidate Questionnaire](#)
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Dennis Bartolucci

Dennis Bartolucci holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Connecticut and a Master of Public Administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. He is a retired CPA, licensed in Massachusetts, Ohio, and Illinois, and spent 32 years at PricewaterhouseCoopers, including 20 years as a partner overseeing the firm's Midwest region consulting business, risk management, and client service. He has owned a home on Marco Island since 2011 and has lived there full-time since 2022. ([campaign website](#); [candidate questionnaire](#))

Bartolucci applied for an appointed Marco Island City Council vacancy during the city's 2024-25 selection process and was named one of two finalists in January 2025, though the council ultimately chose another applicant ([Coastal Breeze News](#); [Coastal Breeze News](#))

Platform

"Money is needed for everything we do as a city," Bartolucci says on his website's [Issues page](#) and in response to my question about his priorities. "We need to diversify our city revenue. Our major source of revenue, and the only one we really control, is the property tax. The residential properties pay 96% of this. Tourists contribute zero to the city treasury directly and very little indirectly, yet a significant portion our city costs are for supporting and hosting tourists." ([campaign website](#); [candidate questionnaire](#))

“We also need leadership that is a better steward of our money,’ he said on his candidate questionnaire. “I am a fiscal conservative. We need people with real skills and experience, not just narrow local experience.” ([candidate questionnaire](#))

Other issues addressed on his website’s [Issues page](#) are:

- Restoring Our Waterways
- Hilton Hotel Expansion
- Rose Marina Public Policy

He says he disagrees with Council’s decision “that the City and the Council are free to violate our city Ordinances. There are multiple instances of the Council willfully violating law, and the City Attorney saying there are no penalties involved when the City and Council do so.... I also disagreed when the current Council voted to raise taxes in September 2025 to pay for a ‘fake emergency’ that the city manager declared. This situation was proven as fake by a vote of the Council in September 2026.” ([candidate questionnaire](#))

A decision or action by the City Council in the last four years that he supported and would want to see continued was the decision “to pursue an Advanced Wastewater Treatment solution to mitigate the substantial pollution being dumped on our island... We need to ensure this solution is implemented, and it is a top goal of mine.” ([candidate questionnaire](#))

Endorsements

No endorsements were provided on Bartolucci’s candidate questionnaire or listed on his campaign website as of Sept. 14, 2026.

In the News

- Planning board tackles controversial projects. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 4/9/26)
- Council moves AWT forward, debates noise ordinance. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 6/4/26)
- Council approves Rose Marina requests after marathon meeting. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 9/11/26)

The following opinion pieces by Bartolucci appeared in the Coastal Breeze News:

- Water, water everywhere: the lifecycle of water on Marco Island. (Guest commentary via [Coastal Breeze News](#), 3/26/26)
- The golden boardwalk. (Letter to the editor via [Coastal Breeze News](#), 5/14/26)
- Our next disaster is already here, and it’s scrambling around in plain sight. (Guest commentary via [Coastal Breeze News](#), 8/27/26)

Further Research

- [Campaign website](#)
 - [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Sparker's Soapbox Candidate Questionnaire](#)
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Darrin Palumbo

Darrin Palumbo was born and raised in Jersey City, New Jersey, and attended Middlesex County College and Rutgers University, along with real estate and finance coursework at the New Jersey Realty Institute and the Bert Rogers Real Estate School. He was formerly licensed as a SEC security broker, mortgage broker, and insurance broker, has held a Florida real estate license since 2001, and is currently both a real estate agent with Sun Realty and a small business owner of Sweet Annie's Ice Cream Parlour on Marco Island. He has lived on the island for 28 years. ([Coastal Breeze News](#); [campaign website](#); [campaign website](#); [candidate questionnaire](#))

Palumbo is a Safe Boater and U.S. Auxiliary course graduate who previously served on the city's Waterways Advisory Committee. He was elected to the Marco Island City Council in November 2022 and was elected Council Chairman by his colleagues in November 2025; he also currently serves on the Collier County Tourist Development Council. He has been a Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor for 24 years and has coached youth sports through the Optimist Club, Marco Island Academy, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes programs, and has raised more than \$200,000 for Marco Island Academy sports and academics programs. ([Coastal Breeze News](#); [Marco Eagle](#); [Marco Eagle](#); [campaign website](#); [candidate questionnaire](#))

Platform

Palumbo's [campaign website](#) lists five campaign priorities:

- Fiscal Responsibility
- Protecting Marco Island's Quality of Life
- Clean Water
- Investing in Our Community
- Preparing Marco Island for Tomorrow

According to his [candidate questionnaire](#), his top priorities if elected are:

- "The hardening of our community against hurricanes, tidal surges, and king tides. Using the dome homes as a notable example, if you do not maintain and fortify your community, the gulf will reclaim it."

- “Infrastructure needs such as the implementation of Advanced Wastewater Treatment and the hardening of our electric grid.”
- “The rezoning of Marco Island into Florida’s 22nd Congressional District. This topic, although it has not gained much attention, should be one of the most important conversations to have during our election season.... I have already started to reach out to our congressional candidates to get to know them and to make sure that Marco Island and our beach and coastal needs are not forgotten within Florida’s newly rezoned district.”
- “Maintaining our quality of life through the balance of residential neighborhoods and a strong business economy. We can only accomplish this through a united community.”

A decision of Council in the last four years that he disagreed with was “The passing of the short-term rental ordinance. I was 100% in support of an ordinance and strongly advocated for a legally defensible and enforceable version. However, the version that was passed did not meet legal muster (which is why I voted against it) and ended up costing our residents approximately \$750,000 of wasted taxpayer dollars with nothing to show for it.... I would like to bring this to a united resolution that benefits residents’ needs while working within the scope of the law.” ([candidate questionnaire](#))

One decision or action by the City Council in the last four years that he supported and would want to see continued was “the banning of rat poison (rodenticide) on all municipal properties ... in an effort to save our burrowing owls and to help ensure their survival on our island.” Others mentioned are “the approval of Advanced Wastewater Treatment” and “returning land back to nature through Conservation Collier.” ([candidate questionnaire](#))

Endorsements

On his [campaign website](#) and/or in his [candidate questionnaire](#), Palumbo lists the following endorsements:

- Yvette Benarroch, Florida House District 81 Representative
- John Dailey, Mayor of Tallahassee
- Sara Baxter, Mayor of Palm Beach County
- Rene Champagne, Marco Island City Council Vice Chair
- Greg Folley, former Marco Island City Councilor and Chair
- Terri Ballo, Joe Batte, and Becky Irwin, former Marco Island City Councilors and/or Chairs
- Bill “Coach” Kramer, Naples City Council Member
- Chris Lewandowski, Chairman, Marco Island Waterways Advisory Committee
- Al Palacio, Second Vice President, Florida State Fraternal Order of Police
- Robert Benson and Melodee James, Marco Island

In the News

- Darrin Palumbo announces re-election campaign. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 8/13/26)

Further Research

- [Campaign website](#)
 - [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Sparker's Soapbox Candidate Questionnaire](#)
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Chris Ricci

Chris Ricci was raised in the Boston area, and lived in Silicon Valley, CA, before moving to Marco Island in 2021. He holds a Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; a Juris Doctor, cum laude, from New England School of Law; and an executive/mini-MBA from the Wharton School. He is the CEO of AutoConnect Holdings, LLC, a technology company focused on automotive connectivity and intellectual property. He also has more than 35 years of experience as an entrepreneur and senior executive, including senior roles at Fortune 500 companies NCR, Flex, NIO, and Avaya, and experience building and leading companies in the automotive, technology, and insurance industries. ([Coastal Breeze News](#); [Marco Island city record](#))

Ricci has chaired the city's Beach and Coastal Resources Advisory Committee since February 2025 and previously served on its Audit Advisory Committee. He is also a former Commander of the Marco Island Sail & Power Squadron and a Coastal Breeze columnist, as well as an unsuccessful applicant for an appointed Marco Island City Council vacancy in 2024. Prior elected office includes the Braintree, Massachusetts, Town Council (1990). ([Marco Island city record](#); [Coastal Breeze News](#); [Marco Island city record](#))

Platform

Ricci's [campaign website](#) lists nine named issue areas:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| • FY27 Budget Takeaways | • Canal Water Quality |
| • Property Tax Reform | • Short-Term Rentals |
| • Hilton Variance | • Pickleball |
| • Infrastructure Referendum | • Public Safety Funding |
| • Turtle Lot Proposal | |

According to his [candidate questionnaire](#), his top priorities if elected would be:

- Fiscal discipline and infrastructure: Years of millage reductions have kept taxes low, but they have also reduced budget flexibility while major infrastructure needs remain. We need a long-range capital plan, disciplined spending, and aggressive pursuit of grants and alternative funding before asking taxpayers for more.
- Water quality: Advanced Wastewater Treatment is a worthwhile start, but our canals also face sediment, circulation, and other nutrient sources; solutions should be science-driven, tested, and measured.
- Responsible redevelopment: Aging hotels, marinas, and commercial properties will need reinvestment, but projects should be judged by their actual impacts on traffic, scale, parking, infrastructure, the environment, and neighboring properties.
- Protecting Marco's quality of life: Residents deserve predictable rules, consistent enforcement, and a City government that listens, explains its decisions, and focuses on measurable results rather than slogans.

One decision or action by the City Council in the last four years that he disagreed with was “continuing annual millage-rate reductions without pairing them with a sufficiently clear long-term capital and infrastructure funding plan. Keeping taxes low is important, and I support fiscal discipline, but repeatedly reducing recurring revenue while major infrastructure needs continue, leaves the City with less flexibility and greater reliance on borrowing.” ([candidate questionnaire](#))

One decision he supported and would want to see continued was “the 2026 decision to move forward with Advanced Wastewater Treatment at the City's wastewater treatment facility... I would continue that work, but I would also insist on measuring results. AWT should be part of a larger, science-driven canal strategy that evaluates sediment, circulation, and other nutrient sources so future investments are directed toward solutions that produce measurable improvements in water quality.” ([candidate questionnaire](#))

Endorsements

In his [candidate questionnaire](#), Ricci lists the following endorsements:

- Rene Champagne, Marco Island Council Vice Chairman
- Chris Scherzinger, former CEO, Webber

In the News

- Chris Ricci announces city council campaign. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 8/6/26)

Further Research

- [Campaign website](#)
 - [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Sparker's Soapbox Candidate Questionnaire](#)
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Teri Sommerfeld

Terese “Teri” Sommerfeld holds a Bachelor of Science in Critical Care Nursing from University of Illinois Chicago Medical District and a Master of Health Administration in Hospital and Healthcare Facilities Administration/Management from Governors State University. She spent her career at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, where she held senior leadership roles overseeing clinical, operational and financial performance for allied health services, stroke units and acute rehabilitation programs. She managed large-scale budgets, led compliance efforts involving rigorous national accreditation standards and helped guide evidence-based improvements in patient care and institutional operations. She maintains an active RN license in Florida and has held past certifications in rehabilitation nursing and holistic nursing. She retired as a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and is registered as a healthcare professional volunteer with the State Emergency Responder and Volunteers of Florida (SERVFL), Florida’s official system for registering and credentialing health care and other volunteers who may be called upon to assist during emergencies or disasters. ([campaign website](#))

She currently serves on the City of Marco Island Audit Advisory Committee and has been a regular participant in Marco Island City Council meetings through citizen comment. She applied for an appointed Marco Island City Council vacancy in late 2024 and was named one of four finalists; the council selected another applicant. ([campaign website](#); [Coastal Breeze News](#); [Coastal Breeze News](#))

Platform

According to Sommerfeld’s [campaign website](#), the Marco Island community deserves:

- Clean Water
- Exceptionnal Quality of Live [sic]
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Unity and Collaboration

According to her [candidate questionnaire](#), her top priorities if elected are:

- Completing the advanced wastewater treatment upgrade.

- Creating a long-term maintenance and capital improvement plan and making timely investments in our parks, roads, bridges, stormwater systems and public facilities before problems become more serious and expensive.
- Practical solutions to long-standing quality-of-life concerns, including strengthening the noise ordinance and creating a fair, effective registration program for short-term rentals that protects peaceful neighborhoods while respecting property rights.
- Restore trust in the City through greater competence, accountability and transparency, including a long-range financial plan and a clear, user-friendly budget dashboard.

One decision or action by the City Council in the last four years that she disagreed with was its “decision to approve key elements of the Rose Marina redevelopment because too many important questions remained unanswered and legitimate community concerns had not been adequately addressed.... Responsible growth requires considering whether it is appropriate for our island and consistent with our Comprehensive Plan...” ([candidate questionnaire](#))

One decision she supported and would want to see continued was “City Council’s decision to protect our residents by maintaining the Marco Island Police Department rather than exploring a return to law enforcement by the Collier County Sheriff’s Office. A local police department provides direct accountability to our community and allows officers to develop strong relationships with residents and businesses....” ([candidate questionnaire](#))

Endorsements

On her [campaign website](#) and/or in her [candidate questionnaire](#), Sommerfeld lists the following, among other endorsements:

- Marco Island Council Member Stephen Gray
- Former Marco Island Council Member Joe Rolla
- Deb Reed (widow of former Council Member Howard Reed)

In the News

- Marco Island City Council rejects assisted living facility. ([Marco Eagle](#), 1/23/19)
- Marco Island approves rezoning for assisted living facility. ([Marco Eagle](#), 4/6/21)
- Marco prepares to increase property tax rate. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 7/24/25)
- Hilton plans to head to Council. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 7/31/26)
- Council approves Rose Marina requests after marathon meeting. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 9/11/26)

The following opinion pieces by Sommerfeld appeared in the Coastal Breeze News:

- Commentary: Proposed assisted living facility inconsistent with Marco culture. (Teri Sommerfeld via [Marco Eagle](#), 12/5/18)
- How much more growth can Marco Island really handle? (Teri Sommerfeld via [Coastal Breeze News](#), 8/31/26)

Further Research

- [Campaign website](#)
 - [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Sparker's Soapbox Candidate Questionnaire](#)
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Rick Woodworth

Rick Woodworth, whose full legal name is Douglas “Rick” Woodworth, has been a full-time Marco Island resident since 2017. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in history and pre-law from Illinois Wesleyan University. He was president, managing director, and partner of The Habitat Company in Chicago, where he led the firm’s growth from a 3,000-unit to a 32,000-plus-unit portfolio valued at more than \$5 billion. He has also served more than 40 years as a trustee and executive committee member of the Service Employees Local 1 Health, Welfare and Pension Funds, which he describes as overseeing more than \$350 million in combined assets ([campaign website](#)).

Woodworth has served multiple terms on the City of Marco Island Waterways Advisory Committee, including as chairman, and has also served on the city’s Audit Advisory Committee ([campaign website](#)). He is a founding managing member of Clean Marco Waters, LLC, a water-quality testing and policy organization ([campaign website](#)) and a citizens’ group advocating for clean water in Marco Island’s canals and waterways ([candidate questionnaire](#)). He applied for an appointed Marco Island City Council vacancy in May 2026; the council selected another applicant ([Coastal Breeze News](#); [Coastal Breeze News](#)).

Platform

Woodworth’s [campaign website](#) lists six named priority areas:

- Clean Water and AWT
- Proactive Infrastructure Management
- Fiscal Discipline
- Open, Accountable Government

- Responsible Growth
- Promote Exceptional Quality of Life

According to his [candidate questionnaire](#), his top priorities if elected are:

- Restoring strong financial management, so Marco Island has a workable budget and clear, accurate accounting and reporting.
- Protecting residents' quality of life through a prioritized, financially responsible Asset Management Plan for our bridges, roads, parks, and stormwater systems, so essential infrastructure is maintained on a schedule rather than deferred until it fails.
- Making sure Advanced Wastewater Treatment moves forward to improve water quality in our canals.

One decision or action by the City Council in the last four years that he disagreed with was Council's approach to the \$23 million bond. "I agreed the City needed the funding the bond would provide for deferred infrastructure needs, but I did not believe City staff or the sitting Council would spend it wisely, so I opposed it.... I also disagreed with the single source purchasing process for the \$11 million new potable water meters." ([candidate questionnaire](#))

One decision or action by the City Council in the last four years that he supported and would want to see continued was its May 2026 vote to move forward with an Advanced Wastewater Treatment facility. "I want to see this decision followed through, not revisited or delayed, with funding built from a responsible mix of cash reserves, a rate-structure study, and a dedicated bond issue rather than left to drift." ([candidate questionnaire](#))

Endorsements

In his [candidate questionnaire](#), Woodworth lists the following endorsements: David Rasmussen, Bod [sic] Roth, Anita Sargese, Ralph Robena, Chris Brenner, Victoria Meyers, Julia Brenner.

In the News

- Residents warn reclaimed water polluting canals. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 5/22/25)
- Marco prepares to increase property tax rate. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 7/24/25)
- A new dredging issue hits Council. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 2/19/26)
- Council approves Rose Marina requests after marathon meeting. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 9/11/26)

Further Research

- [Campaign website](#)
- [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

- [Sparker's Soapbox Candidate Questionnaire](#)
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The Race in the News

- Meet the Candidates for Marco Island City Council. ([Coastal Breeze News](#), 10/26/22)
 - Marco Island City Council narrows candidates to 4 for open seat left vacant by Greg Folley. ([Naples Daily News](#), 12/3/24)
 - Marco Island City Council elects new chairman, vice chairman. ([Marco Eagle](#), 11/20/25)
 - Eight apply for open Marco Island City Council seat. ([Marco Eagle](#), 5/15/26)
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Campaign Finances

Bailey's campaign took in \$17,969 in total: \$2,750 in monetary contributions, \$219 in in-kind support, and a \$15,000 personal loan. The \$2,969 in contributions came from 5 donors, 4 of whom were from Marco Island, including one, for \$1,000, from Eugene Wordehoff and Nanette A. Rivera.

Bartolucci's campaign took in \$9,777 in total: \$4,450 in monetary contributions, \$327 in in-kind support, and a \$5,000 personal loan. The \$4,777 in contributions came from 10 donors, 7 of whom were from Marco Island, including Donald Pettit and Jim Heglund, who each contributed the \$1,000 maximum amount. Andrew Dahle of Downers Grove, Illinois, also gave the \$1,000 maximum.

Palumbo's campaign took in \$11,100 in total: \$1,100 in monetary contributions and a \$10,000 personal loan; he reported no in-kind support. Palumbo received two contributions, both from Marco Island; one, for \$1,000, came from Eugene Wordehoff and Nanette A. Rivera.

Ricci raised no outside contributions; his \$100 in total funds is a direct contribution he made to his own campaign.

Sommerfeld's campaign took in \$3,281 in total: \$1,871 in monetary contributions and \$1,410 in in-kind support. The majority of her contributions came from Marco Island councilor Stephen Gray, who gave a \$1,000 check, and from the Son of Kwon and Queen Kwon LLCs, whose registered agent is Goede, Adamczyk, DeBoest & Cross, PLLC and which together gave \$1,206 in in-kind support.

Woodworth's campaign took in \$10,338 in total: \$2,320 in monetary contributions, \$517 in in-kind support (\$412 from the candidate himself), and a \$7,500 personal loan. The \$2,838 in contributions came from 9 donors, 7 of whom were from Marco Island, including one for \$1,000 from Eugene Wordehoff.

Campaign finance data is from Campaign Treasurer's Reports filed with the [City Clerk's Office](#), downloaded Sept. 26, 2026.

This post was researched and drafted with the assistance of Claude (Anthropic AI). The content was reviewed, edited, and fact-checked by the author. Both humans and AI can make mistakes. Please let us know if you spot one.