



Colonial Heights Republican Committee

2026 SURVEY FOR COLONIAL HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL

Candidate: Betsy Gentry Luck

1. Please tell us a bit about your background and involvement in the community.

I have lived in Colonial Heights my entire life. I attended all Colonial Heights schools, with the exception of Tussing, where I later had the privilege of teaching. My husband, Hugh and I raised our family here.

I served on the Colonial Heights School Board from 1993-1998, including serving as Chairman in 1997 and 1998. I was first elected to City Council in 2000 and served until 2012. I chose not to seek re-election at that time so I could devote more time to caring for my parents.

After retiring in 2015, following 35 years in education, I ran in a special election for Scott Davis' City Council Seat. I served as the Vice-Mayor for 8 years and have had the opportunity to serve on numerous state and local committees.

2. Do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent? If Republican, are you in accord with [The Republican Creed](#)?

Every candidate for Colonial Heights City Council must declare as an Independent. I am a registered Republican and am in accord with the principles expressed in The Republican Creed. I do not always vote strictly along party lines, but I support candidates who most closely reflect the principles and values that I believe are important.

3. Please tell us why you are running for City Council.

I am running for City Council because I sincerely care about Colonial Heights and the people who call it home. Having lived here my entire life and served our community in several capacities, I have a deep understanding of our city, its history, and the issues that affect our residents. I have always tried to be an advocate for our citizens. Residents often reach out to me when they need help navigating issues such as drainage, potholes or other concerns, and I am willing to keep working until we find a solution. I have been called a “fixer” and I take that as a compliment because I believe public service is about listening to people and finding ways to help.

Colonial Heights certainly has challenges, as every community does, but we also have so much to be proud of: a safe community in which to raise a family, a strong educational system, a healthy economic base and dedicated city employees. I am running because I want to continue working to protect those strengths, address our challenges responsibly, and help keep Colonial Heights a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

4. What are two or three things that the City of Colonial Heights is doing well?

Colonial Heights has maintained strong financial stability, in large part because of sound fiscal management and operational excellence. One example is the Memorandum of Understanding established between the City and School Board in 2000, which created an equitable approach to sharing local revenue. While adjustments have been made over the years, this agreement has helped both the city and our school system plan and operate effectively while maintaining a strong working relationship. Other localities have looked to Colonial Heights as an example of how this type of partnership can work successfully.

Colonial Heights is also a distinctive and vibrant community. We value our history and traditions while continuing to look for opportunities to move forward. Our recent emphasis on sports tourism is a good example. We have always had an outstanding parks and recreation program, and the addition of the Tri-City Chili Peppers has helped us recognize the potential economic benefits of sports tourism.

The City's partnership with a developer to bring a hotel, restaurant, and six turf sports fields to the community represents an exciting opportunity for economic development. In addition to the projected economic impact, I believe this project has the potential to encourage new and revitalized businesses in the South Park area and make Colonial Heights even more attractive to families and visitors.

5. What are two or three things that the City of Colonial Heights needs to improve on?

Colonial Heights celebrated its 100th birthday this year. Unfortunately, some of our infrastructure is nearly 100 years old as well. Maintaining and replacing aging infrastructure is probably one of the most pressing, difficult, and expensive challenges facing the City today. The City has continued to address these needs through Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), using a combination of budget transfers, debt proceeds, and state and federal grants. This year, approximately \$8.8 million has been proposed for CIP projects, with approximately \$7 million coming from grants. These projects include new sidewalks, galvanized pipe replacement, drainage rehabilitation, Phase 6 of the Appomattox River Greenway Trail, bridge repairs, water tower rehabilitation and coating, park improvements, and restoration of the Violet Bank Museum, among other infrastructure needs. Continuing to prioritize these investments while making responsible financial decisions will be critical to maintaining our City's infrastructure for future generations.

Another important area for improvement is employee compensation. Our city employees are essential to providing the services our residents depend on, and we need to remain competitive in

attracting and retaining good employees. This year, the City Manager initially proposed a 3% salary increase. Recognizing the rising costs of insurance and other everyday expenses, City Council asked the City Manager to find a way to increase the raise to 4%, which he did. Even with that increase, our salary scales remain below those of some surrounding localities. With approximately 80% of the City's budget devoted to personnel compensation and benefits, finding the right balance between competitive compensation and responsible fiscal management will continue to be a challenge.

6. How will you seek to be responsive to city residents if elected to City Council?

Being responsive to residents has always been a priority for me as a Council member. We are elected by the people, and we have a responsibility to listen to them and represent their best interests. Being a Council member can sometimes feel like riding a roller coaster. There are exciting and rewarding times, and there are also difficult moments when we face criticism or have to make challenging decisions. One of the most important things we can do is listen carefully and remember that the loudest voices do not always represent the majority or what may ultimately be best for our city.

We have had several recent examples of the importance of listening to our residents. When a development was proposed behind Mt. Pleasant, the Planning Commission approved the project and the City administration supported it. However, the neighbors who would have been most directly affected expressed strong concerns. Council listened to those residents and ultimately voted not to approve the project.

Another example involved a proposed splash pad in a quiet residential subdivision. After hearing concerns from the surrounding neighbors, Council listened and changed the plans so that the splash pad could possibly be built in a more appropriate location at a later date.

Personally, I make every effort to respond to the calls and emails I receive as an individual Council member. I have met with neighborhood groups, community organizations, and individual residents to better understand their concerns. I enjoy finding solutions to problems, and I believe being accessible and responsive to the people we serve is an important part of being an effective Council member.

7. In your opinion, what is the number one issue facing the City over the next four years?

In my opinion, the number one issue facing Colonial Heights over the next four years will be finding creative ways to grow and revitalize our city while working within our limited land area. Colonial Heights is a small, landlocked community—approximately three miles by five miles—so we cannot simply expand outward as other communities have been able to do.

We need to make the most of what we already have. That means addressing our aging infrastructure and housing stock while also finding new ways to revitalize our commercial areas. Changes in the way people shop and do business have left vacancies in some of our established

retail areas, including SouthPark Mall. Rather than viewing these changes simply as a problem, I believe they present an opportunity to rethink how these areas can be used and how we can attract new businesses, housing options, and investment.

Our goal should be to preserve the character and quality of life that make Colonial Heights special while encouraging responsible redevelopment and new opportunities. We need to be creative, forward-thinking, and willing to adapt so that Colonial Heights remains a desirable place to live, work, raise a family, and do business.

8. *Is there anything else you would like to share that was not already asked?*

Most people wonder why I want to continue serving on City Council after having been involved in public service for so long. My answer is simple: I enjoy it!

I enjoy interacting with our residents, hearing their concerns—and sometimes their praise—and working to make things better. Public service has always been meaningful to me, and I still find great satisfaction in being able to make a difference in our community.

My family lives here. My granddaughter attends school here. I want Colonial Heights to continue to thrive and to remain the desirable community I have always known and loved. Things change, and they should, but we need to recognize the opportunities that change can bring and make the most of them—in our businesses, our neighborhoods, and our city government.

It is certainly a challenge, but I believe Colonial Heights is worth the effort, and I am still up for the challenge.