



## **Candidate Questionnaire with New Bern Live**

**Submitted: July 13, 2025**

### **1. Full Name as it will appear on the ballot.**

James (Trey) Ferguson

### **2. Please tell us a little about yourself (Include: Family, Education, Work Experience, Church, How long you have lived in New Bern, If you relocated to New Bern what made you decide to make it your home, If you're a lifetime resident, tell us what made you stay.)**

I'm a local government attorney and litigator, a husband, and a proud father of three daughters. My wife introduced me to New Bern early in our relationship. We got married downtown eleven years ago and returned four years ago to be near family and for my role at Sumrell Sugg, P.A. New Bern's strong community values and family-friendly atmosphere made it the perfect place to raise our children.

After graduating from NC State University as a North Carolina Teaching Fellow, I began my career as a high school math teacher. The challenges my students faced outside the classroom led me to get involved in education policy and eventually attend law school at Campbell University.

At Campbell, I served as Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review, worked in the Bill Drafting Division at the General Assembly with a focus on local government, and interned for judges on both the North Carolina Court of Appeals and the U.S. District Court. I also worked as the office manager for a volunteer fire department to help support my family while I was in law school.

Since returning to New Bern, I have remained active in the community, currently serving as Secretary of the Craven County Community Foundation, teaching Sunday school at First Baptist Church, and presiding as a member of the New Bern Board of Adjustment, which hears zoning and land use appeals for the city. I've also served as Secretary/Treasurer of the Craven County Bar Association and on the local SECU Advisory Board.

In my legal practice, I represent local governments across North Carolina in matters involving law enforcement, land use, and constitutional issues. I also serve as general counsel to several public entities in our region.

I'm running to be the Ward 1 Alderman because I believe in the power of responsible, community-focused governance. My foundation of faith, family, and public service supports my commitment to helping shape a strong future for New Bern.

### **3. What made you decide to run for Ward 1 Alderman?**

As an attorney for local governments, my role is not to advise on the content of policy decisions but to advise on the legal implications of those decisions. However, for my community, I want the opportunity to help shape policies to support responsible growth for New Bern. I'm running because I believe Ward 1 deserves a leader who listens carefully and puts people first. I want to be a bridge between our neighborhoods and City Hall in order to bring transparency, responsiveness, and a vision for the future to the work of our local government. Our city has real opportunities ahead, and I want to make sure we seize them in ways that benefit everyone.

### **4. What do you think is the biggest issue for WARD 1?**

Ward 1 faces a twofold challenge: resiliency and economic growth. Many of our historic neighborhoods are vulnerable to flooding and aging infrastructure. We need to invest in long-term solutions that protect homes, preserve history, and keep people safe. At the same time, our downtown area is New Bern's economic engine. We need to make sure it continues to thrive while also ensuring that growth benefits the whole city, not just a few blocks. That means supporting small businesses, improving walkability and encouraging a variety of housing opportunities, all while making sure longtime residents share in the opportunities ahead.

### **5. What do you think is the biggest issue currently for the City of New Bern?**

New Bern lacks a long-term plan for the future. We need a shared vision that guides how we grow, how we spend, and how we invest in our people and infrastructure. One example is our city-owned electric utility; it's currently operating at a deficit while trying to maintain aging infrastructure. Without a proactive plan, we risk short-term fixes that only pass problems down the road. Fiscal responsibility doesn't just mean cutting costs; it means making smart, forward-looking decisions that ensure New Bern remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

**6. What is your favorite thing about living in New Bern?**

What I appreciate most about New Bern is the strong sense of community. Neighbors look out for one another, people are truly involved, and there's a shared pride in our city's history and future.

**7. What do you think makes you the best candidate for Ward 1?**

I bring a strong combination of legal knowledge, public service, and practical experience that uniquely prepares me to serve Ward 1. As an attorney, I understand how laws and policies are made and, more importantly, how they impact people's daily lives. I know how to navigate complex issues, ask the right questions, and help shape thoughtful, effective policies.

I also have a background as an educator, which strengthens my ability to communicate clearly and work collaboratively. These skills are critical for building consensus with fellow board members and keeping residents and businesses informed and involved. I'm committed to listening and being an informed advocate for our community.

**8. How can voters contact you or learn more about you?**

You can learn more at [www.treyforward1.com](http://www.treyforward1.com), where I share my platform, background, updates, and contact information. Voters can email me at [treyforward1@gmail.com](mailto:treyforward1@gmail.com) and can also follow me on Facebook and Instagram. I would welcome hearing from you, so feel free to reach out!