

Addison Fire Association

City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2026



Candidate Name: Darren Gardner

Candidate Address: 4119 Rive Ln, Addison, TX 75001

Candidate Telephone: (214) 785-2128

Candidate Email: darren@gardner4addison.com

1. If you are elected/ reelected, what are your top three (3) priorities for your term?

My top priorities are:

First, maintaining and strengthening Addison's high level of public safety. That includes ensuring our fire and police departments have the people, training, equipment, and facilities they need to perform at a high level.

Second, continuing disciplined redevelopment and long-term planning so Addison remains economically strong and able to support the services our residents and businesses rely on.

Third, maintaining financial responsibility and accountability to ensure we are using taxpayer dollars effectively while continuing to invest in critical services and infrastructure.

2. How do you view the Fire Association's participation in local elections?

I believe it is appropriate and valuable for organizations like the Firefighters Association to participate in local elections.

They bring direct, real-world perspective on public safety, operations, and the needs of first responders, which is important for both candidates and voters to understand.

I also believe elected officials should maintain independence and make decisions based on what is best for the entire community. Input from the Association is an important part of that process, along with input from residents, businesses, and Town leadership.

That balance supports strong decisions, transparency, and trust..

3. What are the most important issues/problems the Town of Addison currently faces? How would you address it if elected/ reelected?

The most important issue is managing redevelopment in a way that strengthens the Town while maintaining quality of life and keeping pace with public safety needs.

Addison is largely built out, so our future depends on how well we reinvest in aging office and commercial properties. Continuing to attract strong businesses and upgrading those assets is critical to maintaining a vibrant economy and the tax base that supports our services.

As activity increases, infrastructure, mobility, and public safety resources must keep pace.

My approach is proactive planning and disciplined execution. That includes working closely with Town staff, including public safety leadership, to stay ahead of demand while continuing to strengthen Addison as a premier place to live, work, and play.

4. How do you view the safety of Fire Association members while they are on duty? Do you feel retention (turnover) in the fire service impacts the safety of firefighters and residents? Do you feel that an employee should view Addison as the organization they would like to stay and retire from?

The safety of our firefighters is critical, both for them and for the residents they serve.

Well-trained, properly staffed, and well-supported teams operate more effectively and safely. Retention is a key part of that. Experience matters, and turnover can create gaps in knowledge, cohesion, and performance.

I believe Addison should be a place where firefighters can build long-term careers. That requires competitive compensation, strong leadership, quality facilities, and a culture that supports performance and professionalism.

5. What is your opinion of increasing funds for firefighter training to provide more paid opportunities for our members to obtain the knowledge and skills that help keep the citizens of Addison safe.

I support investing in training.

Training is directly tied to performance, safety, and outcomes. Well-trained firefighters are better prepared to handle complex situations, which benefits both the team and the community.

Like any investment, it should be intentional and tied to results, but this is an area where strong investment delivers clear value.

6. Please share your thoughts on how often adequate salary analysis/surveys should be conducted? What would be your plan to address costs associated with the Town's current compensation philosophy?

I would continue to work closely with the Town's HR professionals on the appropriate frequency for salary analysis and market surveys.

Based on my experience and current market conditions, a regular review cycle, such as every two years, is generally appropriate. That said, the timing should remain flexible depending on market changes, retention trends, and competitiveness.

The goal is to ensure Addison remains competitive in attracting and retaining high-quality personnel while maintaining a disciplined and responsible approach to compensation.

7. The members of the Addison Firefighters Association respond to emergencies out of two fire stations. Fire Station 1, located at 4798 Airport Pkwy and Fire Station 2, located at 3950 Beltway Dr. While functional, many members of the AFFA believe these facilities are outdated and are deteriorating at a rapid pace. What importance do you place on infrastructure for recruitment and retention of our emergency response personnel? What steps would you like to see taken to address these concerns?

Facilities are critical to both performance and retention, and I understand the concerns around aging stations.

While both fire stations are functional and we have made meaningful improvements in recent years, we also need to take a long-term view of when more significant upgrades or replacement will be needed.

We also need to be disciplined in how we manage major capital investments and overall debt so we can maintain a competitive and appropriate tax rate for residents and businesses.

As existing bonds begin to roll off over the next several years, that creates a more appropriate window to evaluate and plan for larger fire station investments.

My approach is to continue maintaining and improving our current facilities while working toward a well-timed, long-term plan that ensures our firefighters have the facilities they need without overextending the Town financially.

8. The National Fire Protection Association recommends a minimum of 4 firefighters per engine and ladder company for Career Fire Departments. This ensures effective staffing to safely perform critical tasks including rescue, fire suppression, and ventilation (NFPA 1710). What is your position on increasing minimum staffing from 3 firefighters per engine and ladder company to the NFPA recommendation of 4?

Staffing levels should be based on safety, effectiveness, and data.

The NFPA standard of four firefighters per engine and ladder company is an important benchmark, and it is appropriate to evaluate our current staffing against that standard along with operational data, response times, and real-world conditions in Addison.

Over the past year, we have made meaningful progress in supporting our firefighters, including implementing the 24/96 schedule and a step compensation program. I have heard directly from members how impactful those changes have been, both in day-to-day operations and in significantly improving recruitment and retention.

Building on that progress, staffing decisions should continue to be made in close collaboration with fire leadership, using data and experience to determine what best supports firefighter safety and effective response.

It is also important that we maintain a strong and healthy economy in Addison and manage our budget responsibly so we can continue to support high-quality public safety services over the long term.

My focus is to ensure our firefighters have what they need to do their jobs safely and effectively, while taking a disciplined and thoughtful approach to how we implement any changes.

9. Have you ever had any involvement with labor organizations or associations in the past? How would you best describe this involvement and what are your thoughts on the roles they play for the organizations they serve?

I have worked with and alongside various organizations and associations throughout my career and public service.

I believe these organizations play an important role in representing their members, providing perspective, and contributing to discussions around working conditions, safety, and compensation.

My approach is to listen, understand the issues, and work toward solutions that balance the needs of employees, the organization, and the community. I value the perspective they bring and believe that open communication leads to better decisions and stronger outcomes.

10. Honesty and integrity are key issues for the Addison Firefighters Association. To the best of your knowledge, have all your applications, petitions, and any other paperwork associated with your candidacy been submitted accurately, honestly, free from error, and in such a way that the fundamental integrity of a democratic election is not compromised?

Yes.

To the best of my knowledge, all of my campaign materials, filings, and communications have been accurate, complete, and submitted with integrity. I take this responsibility seriously and believe transparency and trust are essential to public service.

Signature: _____