

NORFOLK

TOMMY LEEMAN

MAYOR 2024

2024

for mayor

TOMMY LEEMAN

Tommy Leeman is a dynamic and resolute community leader who is passionate about making our city a better place for everyone. With a proven history of effective leadership, Tommy is running for mayor to bring fresh perspectives, innovative solutions, and a collaborative spirit to our city government.



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TOMMY LEEMAN



Tommy is a proud, lifelong resident of Norfolk, moving here as an infant from Naval Base Ventura County, California, where his Navy Seabee father was stationed. Raised in the vibrant Ocean View community, his parents divorced when he was young. His father continued his service to our country and was regularly transferred, while he and his mom remained in Ocean View. Tommy's early years were shaped by his mother's resilience and hard work, both at Dominion Energy and at home.

Tommy attended Norfolk Public Schools where he wrestled, and played baseball and soccer at Granby High School. The most significant high school experience occurred when he took advantage of NPS' Vocational Technical Training Program where discovered his passion for the electrical trade. He completed the two-year program in just over one —the first to do so in the program's history. After this, his teachers encouraged him to gain practical experience shadowing at the school with the Maintenance Department. His success in the VoTech program led directly to his first post-high school job at All-Weather Electric.

Tommy had ambition. When an apprenticeship spot opened to become a journeyman electrician through the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW, Local 80), he jumped at the chance. Graduating at the top of the class, his commitment to his craft led him back to the VoTech School, where he taught students only slightly younger than himself. He built his small electrical business, becoming one of Virginia's youngest Master Electricians.

Around this time, Tommy met and married his partner of over 27 years, Margaret (Meg) Gallatin. They decided to raise their family in their hometown, joyfully welcoming their first son in 2000 and their second in 2002. After moving from their first home in Colonial Place to a fixer-upper in Ghent, Meg and Tommy have spent over 20 years working to restore their historic home. Their sons, Boyd and Miller, graduated with honors from the same Norfolk Public Schools their parents attended.

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TOMMY LEEMAN

Professionally, while his family was growing, Tommy also grew his career by opening Leeman Electric, a small business that eventually merged to become L & L Electric and was ultimately sold in 1999. He was a Volunteer Fireman for almost 10 years, which left him with a profound respect and understanding of our First Responder community.

After many years of leading and growing his small business, Tommy was encouraged to change careers and join the financial investment firm, A.G. Edwards, to pursue a new career track as a personal financial advisor. Taking a big leap of faith, with Meg's support, Tommy hung up his electrical wire cutters and joined A.G. Edwards in 1999. In 2005, Tommy was the recipient of the Top 40 Under 40 from Inside Business. Since 2020, Tommy has been a partner at Steward Partners, demonstrating persistence, honesty, an unflinching work ethic, and an ability to connect with people to make them feel secure.

In addition to raising his family and growing his business locally, Tommy has always felt a deep connection to his hometown and community. His activism is evident through his extensive involvement in local non-profit organizations and community groups, from coaching his sons at Fleet Park Little League to volunteering at the varsity level with Granby High School, his alma mater.

Tommy and Meg are very active in their church, Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Ghent. Tommy has served as a Parish Financial Council member for several years, sponsored candidates for Confirmation, volunteered as an electrician, worked in the soup kitchen, and helped extensively with the Norfolk Emergency Shelter Team (NEST), a church-led program to shelter the homeless during critical months.

He supports Norfolk's effort to thrive and grow by mentoring young business leaders through the Downtown 100. In 2015, he was elected to the Downtown Norfolk Council and served as the Board Chair and an Ambassador to Downtown Norfolk during major events. For almost two decades, Tommy has supported ForKids, a grassroots organization dedicated to ending the cycle of homelessness and poverty in Hampton Roads. ForKids has seen tremendous growth and success, partly due to leaders like Tommy, who continue to champion this cause. He currently serves as the Foundation Chair at ForKids.



Tommy Leeman is not just a candidate; he is an enthusiastic and involved member of his community and an advocate for positive change. He is a proven leader who will work tirelessly to make impactful outcomes in our local government and grow our city—one that thrives on diversity, collaboration, and progress. With his experience, vision, and dedication, Tommy is ready to lead our city into a bright and prosperous future.

Tommy Leeman is a dynamic and resolute community leader who is passionate about making our city a better place for everyone. With a proven history of effective leadership, Tommy is running for mayor to bring fresh perspectives, innovative solutions, and a collaborative spirit to our city government.

Tommy Leeman: A Dedicated Leader for Norfolk's Future

WHY I'M RUNNING

I'm running for Mayor because I believe Norfolk has untapped potential that current leadership has failed to realize. I see a city that deserves better—a Mayor who listens to all voices and works for all our residents, ensuring that every neighborhood receives the basic services it deserves. Too often, people run for office but fail to genuinely serve. Our current Mayor seems absent and appears more interested in moving on to another role. It's time for a change.

I am committed to establishing a city leadership culture that prioritizes service to our residents. This culture will be built on transparency, accessibility, and proactivity. I will work to build strong partnerships with federal, state, and local officials, ensuring that Norfolk is a priority at all levels of government.

The status quo isn't moving us forward. What has been accomplished in the last eight years and **where is the plan for moving forward?** We've talked a lot about education and the need to address it, but where is our current Mayor's report card? I will be a cheerleader for our city, ensuring that we spend money efficiently and effectively. I will work collaboratively with our City Manager and City Council, not against them, to restore confidence in our leadership.

I promise to lead with an agenda that benefits all of Norfolk, being an active and engaged Mayor who works tirelessly for the betterment of our city. Let's move forward together and unlock Norfolk's full potential!



TOMMY ON THE ISSUES

EDUCATION

Education is a major concern for voters, with 70% considering it a "very important" factor in their vote. Norfolk's public education system faces significant challenges, including teacher shortages, underfunding, achievement gaps, aging school buildings, and chronic absenteeism. As Mayor, I will work collaboratively with individuals and organizations at all levels to find achievable solutions, ensuring our children receive the best education and learning environment possible. With 80% minority enrollment and 57.5% of students economically disadvantaged, it's our duty to provide every child with the opportunity for success. Let's address these issues together for the benefit of our community.

PUBLIC SAFETY

As Norfolk's Mayor, I will prioritize keeping our community safe by supporting law enforcement with the necessary personnel, equipment, facilities, and training. I'll ensure they receive competitive pay and have affordable housing options within the city they serve while holding them accountable like any other department. My goal is to foster partnerships with neighborhoods, city departments, Hampton Roads partner cities, and state government to enhance public safety. With a high crime rate in Norfolk, we must focus on reducing crime and ensuring a safe environment for all residents, balancing public safety with the protection of civil liberties.

FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity is a significant issue in Norfolk, with 13.2% of residents and one in six children facing hunger. Norfolk has the highest rate of food insecurity in the region, impacting over 180,000 people. As Mayor, I will prioritize addressing this issue by ensuring access to nutritionally adequate food for all needy families and individuals. Food insecurity not only leads to empty stomachs but also contributes to chronic health problems, mental health issues, and reduced productivity. I am committed to partnering with local organizations to provide healthy meals and support the well-being of all Norfolk residents.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

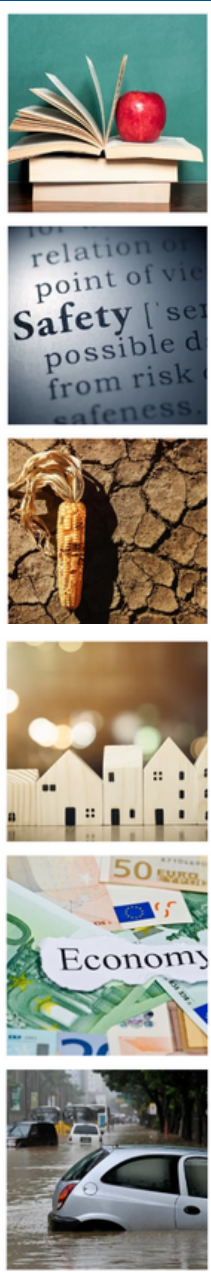
Affordable housing is a critical issue in Norfolk, where housing prices have increased by over 150% in the past decade, making it the biggest expense for many residents. This crisis forces individuals and families into difficult choices between paying rent and affording essentials like food or healthcare, often leading to instability and homelessness. As Mayor, I will create a committee of government and private citizens to develop practical solutions for affordable housing, essential for a stable community. By addressing this issue, we can support a diverse workforce, benefit local businesses, and build a stronger, more equitable future for all.

ECONOMY

As Mayor, I will prioritize attracting and expanding business investments in Norfolk. We cannot rely solely on taxes and grants. Revitalizing vacant storefronts and office spaces is crucial, and we must encourage diverse businesses, from small shops to tech companies, to fuel our city's success. I will ensure development benefits the entire community, while preserving Norfolk's unique identity and opposing unchecked development that could harm neighborhoods or displace residents. Addressing challenges like inflation, income inequality, poverty, and the affordable housing crisis requires a strategic plan for responsible growth and revitalization.

SEA LEVEL RISE

As a coastal city, Norfolk faces the realities of climate change, sea-level rise, and coastal erosion. To date, too little has been done, but as Mayor, I will lead with innovation and urgency. I will commission a special committee to enhance flood mitigation planning and accelerate protection efforts, working with experts to implement a comprehensive plan addressing local flooding. Prioritizing sea-level mitigation and critical infrastructure projects, I will ensure smart planning, a skilled workforce, and sufficient investment to guarantee Norfolk's safety and resilience for future generations.



WHY NORFOLK NEEDS NEW LEADERSHIP

EDUCATION

- Schools struggling with low performance and insufficient resources
- Persistent disparities in educational quality across the city
- High dropout rates and low academic achievement in lower-income neighborhoods
- Lack of substantial investment in education
- Insufficient innovative solutions to support students
- Growing frustration among parents and educators
- Inadequate response to concerns from parents and educators

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Increasing crime rates in the city
- Perceived lack of effective response from city leadership
- Insufficient efforts to improve police-community relations
- Inadequate enhancement of law enforcement resources
- Slow progress in implementing comprehensive crime prevention strategies
- Failure to address underlying social issues contributing to crime
- Ongoing safety challenges and sense of insecurity among residents

FOOD INSECURITY

- High levels of food insecurity among residents
- Insufficient support for food assistance programs
- Inadequate measures to address root causes of hunger
- Fragmented and underfunded city response to food insecurity
- Lack of a comprehensive strategy to combat food insecurity
- Growing needs of vulnerable populations not being met
- Families struggling to obtain essential resources

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Crisis in affordable housing availability
- Slow materialization of affordable housing projects
- Demand for affordable units exceeding supply
- Rising property costs and gentrification displacing residents
- Inadequate housing options for low-income families
- City's inability to keep pace with housing needs
- Exacerbation of housing market strain

ECONOMY

- High unemployment rates in the city
- Stagnant wage growth and persistent poverty levels
- Job insecurity among residents
- Slow economic diversification beyond military and port industries
- Lack of substantial progress in attracting new businesses
- Ineffective fostering of economic development
- Disparities in economic opportunities across different communities
- Residents feeling disconnected from economic growth strategies
- Uncertainty about future economic prospects

SEA LEVEL RISE

- Significant threat from rising sea levels
- Inadequate flood prevention and resilience measures
- Lagging efforts to bolster city infrastructure against flooding
- Vulnerable communities exposed to frequent flooding and property damage
- Lack of comprehensive and timely solutions to address sea level rise
- Exacerbation of flooding issues and property damage
- Shortcomings in addressing impacts of sea level rise on the city





IT'S TIME TO TAKE NORFOLK FORWARD

Kenny Alexander on Education

Education in Norfolk, VA, is struggling with low performance and insufficient resources. Critics say Mayor Kenny Alexander has failed to address these issues, resulting in disparities in educational quality, especially in lower-income neighborhoods with high dropout rates and low academic achievement. The lack of investment and innovative solutions has left many students unsupported, frustrating parents and educators who feel their concerns are being ignored.

Kenny Alexander on the Public Safety

Norfolk Mayor Kenny Alexander has faced challenges related to public safety in the city, particularly as Norfolk has experienced increased gun violence and a significant shortage of police officers. At one point, the Norfolk Police Department was short nearly 200 officers, which has raised concerns about the city's ability to maintain public safety. To address this, Alexander implemented strategies like increasing police salaries, improving recruitment efforts, and proposing community-based solutions such as partnering with local organizations to combat violence. However, some critics argue that despite these efforts, the city's crime rate remains a persistent issue and that more comprehensive reforms may be needed.

Kenny Alexander on Food Insecurity

Food insecurity in Norfolk, VA, remains a critical issue, with many residents lacking reliable access to nutritious food. Critics argue that Mayor Kenny Alexander's administration has not effectively tackled this problem, leading to insufficient support for food assistance programs and inadequate measures to address the root causes of hunger. Despite some initiatives, the city's response has been seen as fragmented and underfunded, failing to keep pace with the growing needs of vulnerable populations. The lack of a comprehensive strategy to combat food insecurity highlights the shortcomings in Alexander's approach, leaving many families struggling to obtain the essential resources they need to thrive.

Kenny Alexander on Affordable Housing

Affordable housing in Norfolk, VA, is in crisis, with many residents struggling to find suitable and affordable places to live. Despite Mayor Kenny Alexander's initiatives to increase affordable housing options, critics argue that his efforts have fallen short. Projects have been slow to materialize, and the demand for affordable units far exceeds supply, leaving many low-income families without adequate housing. Additionally, rising property costs and gentrification have exacerbated the problem, displacing long-time residents and putting further strain on the housing market. The city's inability to keep pace with housing needs has highlighted the shortcomings in Alexander's approach to addressing this critical issue.

Kenny Alexander on the Local Economy

Under Mayor Kenny Alexander's tenure, Norfolk's economy has struggled with high unemployment, stagnant wages, and persistent poverty. The city remains overly reliant on the military and port industries, with little progress in attracting new businesses. Critics argue that his administration has not effectively addressed economic disparities across communities, leaving many residents feeling disconnected and uncertain about their future. Large and small businesses are fleeing Norfolk for other cities in the region or other states. It's time for new leadership to bring fresh ideas and solutions to these challenges.

Kenny Alexander on Sea Level Rise

Mayor Kenny Alexander has shown significant weaknesses in addressing sea level rise. Despite Norfolk's increasing vulnerability, his administration has failed to implement effective flood mitigation strategies, demonstrating a lack of urgency and innovation. His efforts have been more rhetoric than action, leaving the city unprepared for the growing impacts of flooding and placing residents and infrastructure at considerable risk.



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