

# **Water Users Coalition**

## **Questions to the 2020 AWBD Candidates**

- 1. In a few words, what do you think is the most important thing we need to do (focus on) in order to ensure AWBD is a sustainable organization?**

**Ellen Hughes – Candidate for at Large Positions- Board of Trustees**

MEMBERSHIP. There are numerous facets of AWBD that are important, but under the umbrella of membership my top two are Membership Recruitment and Membership Education. I want to make sure every MUD Board Director in the State of Texas knows about AWBD, especially as their number one resource for education and networking. Regarding education, I think it is crucial that members attend our conferences and seminars and that their expectations are met, and they leave the event having gained applicable knowledge to take back to their district. Everyone’s time is valuable.

**Crystal Kirby – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

Personally, I feel AWBD should continue to focus on increasing its membership with more consultants and contractors, and encourage more member participation within the organization itself.

**Jerry Homan – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

We will need to continue to evolve with the modernization of technology. We will also need to improve our communication and interaction with our membership. Continue to build our network of partners in the water industry including advocacy for important issues that affect our members. And last but not least increase our membership, as our membership grows we will have a stronger representation.

**Trisha Frederick – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

We need to continue to focus on growing membership, developing a pipeline for leadership, and being good stewards of our members’ dollars to keep fees for membership and educational events affordable.

During my term as a Trustee I have led the following initiatives for developing a pipeline for AWBD’s leadership:

- Development of committees to provide more leadership opportunities for membership.
- Diversified the Advisory Council to include experts in different fields and backgrounds.
- Created Emerging Leaders program to facilitate the future generation of leaders for the organization.

- 2. What would you do as an AWBD trustee to help MUD/PUDs?**

**Ellen Hughes – Candidate for at Large Positions- Board of Trustees**

During my second term on the Board of Trustee’s I will continue to stay engaged and active in all aspects of the Board including regular meetings, committee meetings and special events. Because of reduced annexations, MUD’s in Texas are governmental bodies that are here to stay. I will work to provide our membership with needed tools to think strategically and achieve long term positive outcomes for residents. Setting their MUD up now for good governance and quality infrastructure that endures long after they have left their Board should be everyone’s goal.

**Crystal Kirby – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

I would like to use my previous experience in the waste industry to help guide the membership regarding garbage services. I would also like to continue my efforts of educating the public on the importance of MUDs and exactly how we benefit Texas.

**Jerry Homan – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

I will actively advance the ideas and concerns of our membership and work to provide opportunities for meaningful open discussion on water issues. I will seek out solutions to water problems and take action to support enacting policies, laws, and regulations that will help provide safe drinking water as cost efficiently as possible. I will also work hard to minimize unnecessary burden and regulation.

**Trisha Frederick – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

As a Trustee my goal is to ensure AWBD is the premier ***source of education*** for all matters concerning MUDs. To achieve this goal, I would continue to do the following:

- Expand use of AWBD app so that education is provided at your fingertips
- Provide a library of educational videos that are easily accessible by membership
- Make the website more interactive and searchable for specific industry related topics, especially updates during legislative session.
- Continue to identify and invite industry experts to sit on AWBD’s Advisory Council, present at conferences/programs, and submit articles to the Journal publication.

**3. How can we enhance AWBD’s efforts of educating the public, the press, other media, and other government officials about the true value of MUDs?**

**Ellen Hughes – Candidate for at Large Positions- Board of Trustees**

The phrase “MUD’s are good for Texas” is simple yet so profound. AWBD needs to constantly be in a proactive, PR campaign that champions the message to everyone, all the time and in a variety of ways. When it comes to getting our message out we need to be proactive, not reactive. Some progress has been made towards this end but there is still work to do, and I very much would like to be on the Board to help in this endeavor.

**Crystal Kirby – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

Possibly hold town hall meetings in the communities to help educate the public and invite the local media. Also, continue to establish and build on relationships with government officials and work with them on improving the community.

**Jerry Homan – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

AWBD is in the process of hiring a new communications manager to enhance all communications and new technologies. With the new hire of Auggie Campbell and the promotion of Taylor Cavnar, the management staff will have more time to focus on all of these efforts including advocacy for MUD issues in general.

**Trisha Frederick – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

MUDs have tremendous value to Texas residents by providing safe water, affordable homes, and an overall better quality of life. It is the job of AWBD leadership to ***effectively communicate the value*** of MUDs to audiences of interest, including the public, media and government officials.

During my term as Trustee, I created the communications committee to focus on enhancing communication efforts, including providing an app and creating educational videos. Recently, the Board of Trustees and staff has stepped up the commitment for better communication by adding a communications professional to the AWBD staff. It is the role of our communications staff member to focus on the development and implementation of effective communication strategies to our different audiences.

4. **The 2019 AWBD LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLE # 11 states the following:** AWBD opposes any effort to shift responsibility of maintenance for road or related facilities, including storm sewers located within the right of ways or within related easements dedicated to the public or a county, from counties to water districts. DO YOU AS A CANDIDATE SUPPORT PRINCIPAL # 11 AS CURRENTLY WRITTEN? YES\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ Please comment on your answer.

**Ellen Hughes – Candidate for at Large Positions- Board of Trustees**

**Yes**, I wholeheartedly support this legislative principle because it aligns with the Mission and Vision of AWBD. What I do find ironic about this issue (#11) is that most of the time local and state officials accuse MUD's of having too much power and authority. But when it is fiscally convenient for them, they work to shift that responsibility (authority) to MUD's. Doing so is an unfunded mandate and one that very few MUD's can afford.

**Crystal Kirby – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

**Yes**, shifting the maintenance responsibility of roads and other facilities located within the right of ways and easements would also shift a significant amount of financial responsibility within the districts. This change would ultimately lead to higher tax rates and water usage fees for residents within the districts impacted. Therefore, I agree with the AWBD position regarding this issue.

**Jerry Homan – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

**Yes**, I most certainly do! There is an ongoing effort by counties to shift the responsibility of roads and drainage over to the MUDS, resulting in double taxation for our residents living inside muds. The counties would not provide the service we have been paying for

all of these years. This would require the MUDs to increase their tax rates to deal with the ageing infrastructure of roads and drainage in addition to water and sewer.

**Trisha Frederick – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

**YES**, the responsibility of a MUD is to provide water, sewer, and stormwater drainage services in areas where municipal services are not available. A MUD should have a choice of whether they want to maintain road or related facilities.

**5. What in particular would like to achieve as an AWBD Trustee?**

**Ellen Hughes – Candidate for at Large Positions- Board of Trustees**

I have so many “top” priorities already discussed but one not mentioned yet is the transition process for our new Executive Director (ED) Auggie Campbell. I was involved in the search and selection process and I am thrilled that we hired someone like Auggie who is an absolute perfect fit for AWBD. The stability and professionalism provided by Merry Leonard and her length of tenure as ED of AWBD is a rare gift. For that reason, the transition to a new Executive Director should not be taken lightly and I would very much like to be a part of the process.

**Crystal Kirby – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

As previously mentioned, I would like to help bridge the gap between our residents, community leaders and government officials regarding what MUDs do and our importance to the communities in which we service.

**Jerry Homan – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

I currently serve on four AWBD committees: Membership, Local Government, Programs and Office Relations. In 2019 as the chairman of the membership committee, our team increased membership by 5% in one year with 39 new members. The Local Government Sub Committee is working on local issues that directly effect MUDs. The AWBD Program committee continues to put out very good meaningful seminars that are very helpful to our membership including offering virtual opportunities and cyber security with online certification. The Office relations committee improve pay and benefits for our personnel. We hired a new Executive Director, Auggie Campbell, promoted Taylor Cavnar and hired a new communications manager. We are very excited about improving our office space to accommodate our growing organization. I want to continue to help improve AWBD.

**Trisha Frederick – Candidate for at Large Positions – Board of Trustees**

The current Board of Trustees are amazing, informed, passionate AWBD members and we have had the opportunity to work on many successful projects together. If re-elected to the Board, this would be my last and final term. Building a pipeline for leadership is integral to the sustainability of the organization. The one last measurable goal I would like to achieve would be to graduate the first class of the Emerging Leaders program.