

## Gallo, Deane announce Mayoral runs on first day of registration



Long-time Councillor John Gallo has formally thrown his hat into the ring for Aurora's top job.

Councillor Gallo formally registered his candidacy for Mayor on Friday morning, just a couple of hours after the process opened.

It became a two-person race less than an hour later when Shawn Deane, a frequent delegate to Council on financial and budgetary matters, registered as well.

Incumbent Tom Mrakas had not formally announced his intentions by press time.

Also joining the municipal race on the first day of registration was Lauren Hanna, who is vying for the role of Ward 1 Councillor, and Nikki Alber, who is seeking the Councillor position in Ward 3.

"I'm excited to bring my message to everyone and have them join the momentum," said Gallo, adding voters looking for a "different style of leadership in Aurora."

"I've got 14 years [of Council experience], I think I know the role, and I think we need a change," he added. "I think we're at an important moment in Aurora's history. We need a change in style, a change in the way this place is run."

After six years on Council, Gallo previously ran for Mayor of Aurora in 2014, challenging incumbent Geoffrey Dawe for the role. He was subsequently re-elected to Council in 2018 and again, this time representing Ward 5, in 2022.

Deane told The Auroran he's looking forward to offering the people of Aurora "a fresh new choice for leadership."

"Today, I'm excited to register," he said. "I look forward once again to bringing the people of Aurora fresh new leadership" and a choice."

First to arrive at Town Hall to register for a Council position on Friday morning was Alber, having already received the endorsement of outgoing Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner, who is retiring after more than two consecutive decades on Council.



Nikki Alber is running to be Councillor for Ward 3.

Alber said Gaertner's endorsement is "everything" and she's "excited for the opportunity to give back."

"I've always been looking for ways to give back, so when this opportunity arose, I knew that I had to take it and support the community that we're living in," she said.

Community safety and development are among her top concerns.

"We need development, but we want to make sure it's responsible, respectful of residents that are living there, but also responsible from an environmental and a financial perspective," she said. "I'm excited to get started [with the campaign]. I'm excited to meet people from the community. I'm a candidate because I want to solve problems that I hear all the time people have in the community. I want to put myself in a position where I can make a difference."

Hanna, who signalled her intention to run earlier this year, arrived at Town Hall moments after Alber to formalize her Ward 1 run. She said she has been "excited" for the registration day.



Lauren Hanna is running to be Councillor in Ward 1.

"I want to get out early for people to know that I'm a serious, keen, hard-working contender," she said on why she wanted to sign up on the first day of the campaign. "I've really appreciated the advice, encouragement, support, and offers to help. It's been encouraging to know I'll have a strong team behind me."

"I get the sense that residents are keen to be more engaged in the Town and issues that are impacting them, to be involved in local decisions and feel their voice matters. At the same time, I think we can do more to increase accountability and have more trust in our Ward Councillor and the government at large," she said. "It's about being someone who cares deeply about the Town and is passionate about doing more to engage residents. I think that having improved communication and involvement of citizens is a way to build that trust and culture of democracy that starts at the community level and can grow from there."

The vote in Ward 1 became a two-person race on Monday with Heritage Advisory Committee member Rocco Morsillo also throwing his hat into the ring.



Rocco Morsillo is also running to be Councillor in Ward 1.

"I'm excited to finally register to run for Councillor of Ward 1," he said. "I feel very connected to this community and know I can represent the constituents with a strong, clear voice on Council. I've had a construction, development and property investment company in Aurora for over two decades. I've also served on the Heritage Committee for several years and live in the Heritage District. I believe this background is ideal to understanding controlled development and municipal budgets in Aurora. I've had overwhelming support from the community and I'm focused on ensuring I put residents first."

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