

January 14, 2025

Citizens of Burnet County

RE: Candidate Evaluation for Interim Burnet County Judge: An Informed Analysis for
Leadership and Stability

Dear Friends,

As a citizen of Burnet County, I believe it is crucial to evaluate the two applicants, Alan Trevino and Guilford L. Jones, III (Gil), for the interim County Judge position based on **merit, experience, and qualifications**. This is an **administrative hiring process**, not a political election. The goal is to appoint the most capable leader to guide our county during this transitional period. The political election for this role will occur in 2026 for those who wish to run.

This assessment compares the candidates' qualifications, professional backgrounds, leadership skills, and ability to address key challenges facing Burnet County, including budget management, conflict resolution, and fostering collaboration. By focusing on these critical areas, this report identifies the candidate best equipped to provide **stable, impartial, and effective leadership**.

I hope this fair and evidence-based evaluation will assist citizens in understanding the applicants and encourage a thoughtful, non-political approach to this appointment. The ongoing turmoil within our county government has created unnecessary fear and uncertainty. Selecting the right leader based solely on qualifications—not politics—is essential to restoring stability and trust.

Thank you for considering this input on such an important decision.

Most sincerely,

Donna Holland Wilcox
Burnet County Citizen, Voter & Taxpayer

"Candidate Evaluation for Interim Burnet County Judge: An Informed Analysis for Leadership and Stability"

Section I

Burnet County Judge Job Description, plus knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed.

Category	Details
Job Title	County Judge
Department	Burnet County Judge
Reports To	Commissioners Court
Classification	Elected Official
General Description	Presiding officer of the five-member county commissioners court with executive, judicial, and legislative responsibilities.
Essential Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preside over Commissioners Court and oversee the agenda - Head emergency management for the county - Chief budget officer - Call and manage elections - Approve bonds and sureties - Serve as judge for certain criminal, civil, and probate cases.
Knowledge Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of local government operations and responsibilities - Familiarity with county budgeting and financial management - Basic knowledge of election laws and procedures - Awareness of emergency management principles - Understanding of judicial processes for criminal, civil, and probate cases.
Skills Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong leadership and decision-making skills - Effective public speaking and communication abilities - Negotiation and conflict resolution skills - Analytical skills to assess financial and legal documents - Organizational skills to manage agendas, meetings, and county initiatives.
Characteristics Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impartiality and fairness in decision-making - Integrity and adherence to ethical standards - Ability to collaborate with diverse stakeholders - Resilience and composure under pressure (e.g., during emergencies) - Commitment to public service and community well-being.
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U.S. Citizen - Resident of Texas for at least 12 consecutive months - Resident of Burnet County for at least 6 consecutive months - Registered to vote in the county - At least 18 years old

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No felony convictions - Not declared mentally incapacitated by a probate court.
Education Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programs must meet Rule 2 of the Rules of Judicial Education approved by the County Judges Education Committee. - Texas Association of Counties is the official registrar for education hours.
Continuing Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 30 hours required in the first year of office. - 16 hours annually thereafter. - Certification for Credit forms to be submitted to the Texas Association of Counties.
Legal Source	Government Code, Section 74.025 (effective Sept. 1, 1987).
Term Duration	Remainder of unexpired term ending 12/31/2026.

Section II

Qualification assessments are based on biographies made public by the candidates.

Candidate 1: Alan Trevino

Category	Job Requirements	Alan Trevino's Qualifications	Alignment
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of local government operations and responsibilities. - Familiarity with budgeting and financial management. - Knowledge of election laws and procedures. - Awareness of emergency management principles. - Understanding of judicial processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extensive experience in law enforcement with Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and as Chief Deputy of Burnet County Sheriff's Office. - Experience managing security and emergency response plans. - Familiarity with state-level boards and committees. 	Strong alignment with emergency management and operations, but limited evidence of direct experience with budgeting, elections, and judicial processes.
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership and decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proven leadership as Chief Deputy, 	Strong leadership and organizational skills,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> skills. - Public speaking and communication abilities. - Negotiation and conflict resolution skills. - Analytical skills for financial and legal documents. - Organizational skills for managing agendas and initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> security detail leader, and CEO of a security company. - Analytical skills in planning security logistics and cost analysis. - Organizational skills demonstrated through board leadership and professional responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> though limited specific examples of financial document analysis or public speaking in a legislative capacity.
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impartiality and fairness. - Integrity and adherence to ethical standards. - Collaboration with diverse stakeholders. - Resilience under pressure. - Commitment to public service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - History of ethical service in law enforcement. - Collaborated with stakeholders at the state level through board positions. - Demonstrated resilience in high-pressure roles (security for governors and presidential campaigns). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong alignment with integrity, collaboration, and resilience.
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U.S. citizen. - Texas resident for at least 12 consecutive months. - Burnet County resident for 6 consecutive months. - Registered voter. - At least 18 years old. - No felony convictions. - Mentally capable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meets all residency, citizenship, and eligibility requirements. - Burnet County resident for 5.5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully aligned.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programs must meet Rule 2 of the Rules of Judicial Education. - Continuing education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holds a Master Peace Officer License and has extensive training and certifications in law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will need to pursue additional judicial education to perform them effectively.

	requirements for county judges.	enforcement. - No evidence of judicial education specifically but demonstrates ability to pursue professional development.	
Experience Relevant to Essential Duties	- Emergency management. - Budget oversight. - Election management. - Judicial functions (probate, civil, or criminal).	- Head of emergency response as Chief Deputy and former DPS leader. - No direct experience in budget oversight, election management, or judicial functions, but extensive experience in leadership roles requiring coordination and responsibility.	Strong alignment in emergency management, with limited evidence in budget. No experience or training in judicial responsibilities.

Overall Assessment of Alan Trevino

- **Strengths:** Alan's background demonstrates strong leadership, organizational, and emergency management skills. His history of public service, ethical conduct, and collaboration with state-level organizations aligns well with the role's demands.
- **Gaps:** Alan's qualifications lack direct experience in governmental budgeting, election management, and judicial processes. While these gaps are significant, his proven ability to adapt and lead in complex situations suggests he could develop these competencies quickly with the right support and training.

Candidate 2: Judge Gil Jones

Category	Job Requirements	Judge Gil Jones' Qualifications	Alignment
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of local government operations and responsibilities. - Familiarity with budgeting and financial management. - Knowledge of election laws and procedures. - Awareness of emergency management principles. - Understanding of judicial processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extensive legal and judicial experience (16 years as District Judge, Justice of the Peace). - Strong background in law, governance, and finance (accounting degree and CPA with an international accounting firm with experience as an auditor). - Knowledge of civil, criminal, probate and guardianship laws. - Served in governance and economic development roles. - Has taken National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) courses. For several years he was the Coordinator for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service™ in Burnet and Llano Counties and interfaced directly with County EMCs. 	<p>Exceptional alignment with governance, judicial processes, budgeting, and local government operations.</p>
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership and decision-making skills. - Public speaking and communication abilities. - Negotiation and conflict resolution skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proven leadership as District Judge, mediator/arbitrator (90% success rate), and various board leadership roles. - Analytical skills in law and finance, including budgeting 	<p>Strong alignment with all required skills, particularly conflict resolution, leadership, and analytical abilities.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analytical skills for financial and legal documents. - Organizational skills for managing agendas and initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and governance. - Effective conflict resolution through mediation, arbitration and negotiation. 	
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impartiality and fairness. - Integrity and adherence to ethical standards. - Collaboration with diverse stakeholders. - Resilience under pressure. - Commitment to public service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrated impartiality and fairness through 16 years as District Judge. - Lifelong commitment to public service (military, law, community boards). - Collaborative approach in governance, fostering legislative initiatives and regional growth. 	Exemplary alignment, particularly in impartiality, collaboration, and public service commitment.
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U.S. citizen. - Texas resident for at least 12 consecutive months. - Burnet County resident for 6 consecutive months. - Registered voter. - At least 18 years old. - No felony convictions. - Mentally capable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meets all residency, citizenship, and eligibility requirements. - Burnet County resident for 40 years. 	Fully aligned.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programs must meet Rule 2 of the Rules of Judicial Education. - Continuing education requirements for county judges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holds a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Texas School of Law. - Accounting degree and Certified Public Accountant. - Extensive legal and judicial training. - Previously served as a District Judge, which required 	Fully aligned; exceeds educational requirements with extensive judicial training and experience.

		compliance with judicial education and the highest ethical standards.	
Experience Relevant to Essential Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergency management. - Budget oversight. - Election management. - Judicial functions (probate, civil, or criminal). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Judicial experience handling civil, criminal, juvenile, and family law cases. - Familiarity with budgeting through governance roles (e.g., school boards, economic projects). - Experienced in emergency decision-making as the Burnet County Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES™) Coordinator. - Hands-on judicial probate case management. 	Exceptional alignment with judicial functions, budget oversight, and governance; no direct mention of election management experience.

Overall Assessment of Judge Gil Jones

- **Strengths:** Gil brings an extensive and highly relevant background in judicial and governance roles. His experience as a District Judge uniquely positions him to immediately assume judicial duties, such as probate and contested cases, and his mediation skills highlight his ability to navigate conflicts and collaborate effectively. His financial and budgeting expertise, gained through education and professional experience, is an additional strength.
- **Gaps:** While his profile does not explicitly mention election oversight, his leadership experience suggests that he can quickly adapt to these responsibilities.

Section III

Candidate Comparison

Criteria	Alan Trevino	Judge Gil Jones
Knowledge	Strong in emergency management and operations; limited in budgeting, elections, and judicial processes.	Comprehensive knowledge in law, governance, budgeting, and judicial processes. Trained in emergency management procedures.
Skills	Strong leadership and organizational skills; limited evidence of financial analysis or public speaking in a legislative capacity.	Exemplary leadership, negotiation, and analytical skills, with extensive experience in governance and conflict resolution.
Characteristics	Integrity, resilience, and public service commitment; limited collaboration in legislative contexts.	Exemplary in impartiality, collaboration, and public service commitment. Natural “peacemaker.”
Qualifications	Fully meets all eligibility requirements.	Fully meets and exceeds eligibility requirements, with a long history of residency in Burnet County.
Education	Master Peace Officer License; no direct judicial education but a proven history of professional development.	Juris Doctor; exceeds requirements with extensive legal and judicial training. Accounting degree and Certified Public Accountant.
Relevant Experience	Strong in emergency management and law enforcement; limited in judicial functions and elections.	Extensive judicial experience, governance, budgeting, mediation and emergency management; limited mention of election management.

Recommendation

While both candidates bring valuable strengths, **Guilford L. Jones, III (Gil)** demonstrates a deeper alignment with the specific knowledge, skills, and characteristics required for the County Judge role, especially in judicial and governance responsibilities. His experience as a District Judge and mediator uniquely qualifies him for the position's judicial functions and leadership aspects.

Section IV

Candidate Rating

Each candidate is rated on a scale of 1 to 5 based on their alignment with the County Judge position requirements.

Candidate 1: Alan Trevino

Category	Rating (1-5)	Comments
Knowledge	3.5	Strong in emergency management and operational knowledge, but limited direct experience with judicial processes, budgeting, and election management.
Skills	4	Demonstrates strong leadership, organizational, and decision-making skills; some gaps in financial and legal document analysis and public speaking in a legislative context.
Characteristics	5	Exemplifies integrity, fairness, resilience, and public service commitment, with experience collaborating in high-pressure and diverse environments.
Qualifications	5	Fully meets residency, citizenship, and eligibility requirements.
Education	3.5	Has extensive professional development but lacks specific judicial education or experience to handle judicial functions immediately.
Relevant Experience	3.5	Strong in law enforcement and emergency management, but limited direct experience in budgeting, judicial functions, and election oversight.

Overall Rating: 3.9/5

Alan brings strong leadership and integrity, with exceptional emergency management experience, but lacks the specific judicial and budgetary expertise required for the role.

Candidate 2: Judge Gil Jones

Category	Rating (1-5)	Comments
Knowledge	5	Exemplary understanding of local government operations, judicial processes, budgeting, and governance, with extensive legal and judicial expertise.
Skills	5	Exceptional leadership, negotiation, analytical, and conflict resolution skills; proven ability to collaborate and make fair decisions in complex situations.
Characteristics	5	Embodies integrity, impartiality, collaboration, and commitment to public service, with a demonstrated history of serving diverse stakeholders.
Qualifications	5	Fully meets and exceeds eligibility requirements, with deep roots in Burnet County and decades of relevant professional and community experience.
Education	5	Juris Doctor and extensive judicial training; exceeds requirements with significant legal and governance expertise.
Relevant Experience	5	Extensive experience in judicial functions, governance, budgeting, and mediation; prepared to assume optional judicial duties immediately.

Overall Rating: 5/5

Gil's background, skills, and experience align exceptionally well with all aspects of the County Judge role, making him a highly qualified candidate.

Section V

Candidate Analysis

Candidate 1: Alan Trevino

1. Reason for Wanting the Position:

- Alan initially intended to run for County Sheriff in 2028 but shifted his focus to the interim County Judge role due to the recent resignation.
- His publicly stated plan is to seek this appointment for the interim position and run for County Judge in the 2026 primary election.

2. Considerations:

- Alan's shift in focus may raise concerns about long-term commitment to the County Judge role, as his initial interest was in law enforcement.
- His involvement in ongoing county government conflict, particularly between the Sheriff and the former County Judge, could make it challenging to foster neutrality, collaboration, and trust.
- If appointed, Alan's intention to run for election in 2026 may complicate his ability to act impartially, as decisions during the interim term could be perceived as politically motivated.

3. Strengths:

- Alan has leadership skills and operational experience, particularly in law enforcement and emergency management, which are valuable in crises.
- His familiarity with county-level dynamics could help him quickly acclimate to the position.

4. Concerns:

- His involvement in prior turmoil may create perceptions of bias or perpetuate existing conflicts within the county government.
 - His ambition to run for election may affect his ability to focus on short-term, impartial governance.
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Candidate 2: Gil Jones

1. Reason for Wanting the Position:

- Gil is willing to leave retirement temporarily to serve as the interim County Judge.
- He has explicitly stated he does not intend to run for the position in the 2026 primary election.

2. Considerations:

- Gil's lack of future political ambitions provides assurance of impartiality and decision-making focused solely on the county's best interests.
- His extensive judicial and governance experience makes him highly qualified to handle the responsibilities of County Judge without a steep learning curve.

3. **Strengths:**

- As a retired judge and mediator, he is a neutral party who can stabilize a county government affected by prior conflicts.
- Gil's experience in budgeting, judicial functions, and conflict resolution ensures he can effectively manage pressing issues during the interim period.
- His lack of intent to run in 2026 eliminates concerns about political motivations influencing his interim decisions.

4. **Concerns:**

- Nonapparent. Gil's focus on short-term service and stabilization aligns well with the needs of the interim position.
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Section VI

Recommendation

Based on the candidates' stated intentions, qualifications, and the current dynamics of the Burnet County government, **Gil Jones** is the better choice to serve as the interim County Judge for the following reasons:

1. **Neutrality and Stability:**

- Gil's lack of future political ambitions and extensive judicial experience make him an ideal candidate to provide impartial leadership during a tumultuous period.
- His background as a retired judge and mediator positions him to address conflicts within the county government and foster collaboration among stakeholders.

2. **Conflict Resolution:**

- Given the history of budget conflicts and turmoil, Gil's proven ability to mediate disputes and implement fair solutions is a significant advantage.

3. **Focus on County Needs:**

- As a retired judge who does not intend to run for office, Gil's decisions will prioritize the county's immediate needs without the influence of political ambitions.

4. **Minimizing Risk of Further Conflict:**

- Alan's involvement in past conflicts within the county government and his political aspirations for 2026 may exacerbate divisions and detract from the primary goal of stabilizing county governance.
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Conclusion

Gil Jones is the best candidate for interim County Judge. His neutrality, extensive experience, and focus on short-term service make him well-suited to guide Burnet County through this transitional period while addressing conflicts and ensuring effective governance.