

## **Restore the Balance** **Seven political principles to guide political conduct**

We must do more than simply be against extremism. We must embrace an alternative set of political principles. We believe these seven principles should guide us.

- **We believe** that political parties should vigorously compete over values, principles, and ideas, but also find common ground to solve problems and pass needed legislation. Gridlock is not an option.
- **We believe** facts, supported by irrefutable evidence, are the basis for what to believe and how to act. No civilization can endure when its citizens believe there is no such thing as objective facts or truths.
- **We believe** that no one has a monopoly on the best public policy proposals. That means the ability to listen to and understand both sides of a debate are a prerequisite to finding practical solutions.
- **We believe** public interest must come before party interest. This means putting what is right ahead of loyalty to a party or an individual party leader.
- **We believe** that problem-solving is more important than fund-raising. Extremists line their pockets then use the funds to amplify division instead of producing solutions.
- **We believe** citizens should be free to run for office or volunteer to support the candidate of their choice without being threatened or harassed. Extremism uses intimidation because it cannot stand up to independent, open-minded thinking. Instead, it relies on the mentality of the mob.
- **We believe** it is time to expect citizens to embrace individual responsibility. Extremists always talk about “freedom,” but never mention the responsibility to the community that comes with it.

## Candidate Questionnaire - Grand Junction City Council

1. *What qualifications and experience do you have that can give voters confidence that you should be a member of the Grand Junction City Council? Please be specific.*

**Retired Law Enforcement:** I have spent the past seventeen years serving the City of Grand Junction as a police officer, finishing my career as a detective solving complex financial crimes and homicide cases. During my tenure with the GJPD, I served in numerous capacities and also was elected as president of the Western Colorado Peace Officers Association and to the executive board of the Fraternal Order of Police. For over a dozen years I served on the City of Grand Junction's retirement board, with a fiduciary responsibility for \$70 million of police employee's funds. In this capability I was one of two city employees who worked with the City Manager, City Attorney, City HR Director, Chief of Police, and Chief of the Fire Department, meeting on a quarterly and sometimes monthly basis regarding the retirement plan.

My time with the police department gave me a front-row seat to the special needs of police officers and firefighters, and the challenges they face. Our community is facing a public safety crisis due to the extreme shortage of police officers and dispatchers. Our fire department is also facing staffing issues, and yet the city is considering taking on a merger with the Clifton Fire Protection District that will further challenge their ability to respond to emergencies in the City of Grand Junction. Right now, the city needs a council member who understands these issues and who can help bring solutions to the table.

**Housing/Business Expertise:** Since we moved to Grand Junction twenty years ago, my wife and I accumulated a portfolio of rental properties by saving for a down payment, moving to a new house, and renting the previous house. My experience managing a rental property business in Grand Junction for the past two decades gives me a unique perspective on the current housing shortage in our community. I have spoken with numerous applicants over the years about the challenges they face in finding affordable housing. I have also dealt with the city's planning department regarding zoning, subdividing land, and permitting projects. Through partnerships with the Grand Valley Resettlement Program and the Freedom Institute, I have had the opportunity to rent some of my houses to Afghan refugees and renters with lived experience (previous DOC). This experience has allowed me to see even more of the challenges faced by members of our community who are just trying to get by.

**Capacity:** One other special qualification I have is the capacity to serve. This past March I retired from the police department. Prior to that I was working 40 to 50 hours per week, and managing my rental property business. And while I still manage my rental properties, I have the time available to really do a great job for the City of Grand Junction as a motivated and involved council member.

**Conclusion:** There are several current members of the city council and several candidates with business experience and I have that too. What none of them have is

expertise in public safety. I do. I am also in a position to devote the time required to serve the city and do what's best for Grand Junction.

My priorities include affordable/attainable housing, public safety, and homelessness (homelessness/vagrancy, addiction, and mental health).

**2. *By now, you have read and considered the seven political principles we feel should guide political conduct in Western Colorado.***

***a. Do you endorse each of the seven principles Restore the Balance feels should guide political conduct in Western Colorado?***

I agree with all of the principles with the exception of the second and seventh. I will address this under 1c.

***b. If you endorse them all, please explain how you will work to execute these principles.***

Principal #1 - Agreed. This is what makes the city council position so attractive to me; it's non-partisan (or should be). I believe we should defend our values, principles, and ideas; and I believe that diversity in these areas should be considered a strength that can be harnessed. When a city council with diverse perspectives works together, they can bring about policy that positively impacts our community. If elected, I will work with fellow council members to approach each situation independently, with curiosity, and with the goal to find common ground and a solution that works for Grand Junction.

Principal #2 – See 1c.

Principal #3 – Agreed. One thing our council currently lacks is the ability to build consensus among its members. As a detective, I learned that to solve a case you must know how to listen. If elected, I will listen to others and seek to understand views that differ from my own and apply that knowledge while working with others towards the best solution.

I recently taught a class entitled, “Leadership among Leaders. How to build consensus in a group and lead within a team of leaders.” This was a breakout session for a regional student council summit hosted by Fruita Monument High School. One of the key points of this training was this: Without consensus, problems are YOURS to solve. With consensus, problems are OURS to solve.

Principal #4 - Agreed. See my answer regarding principal #1.

Principal #5 - Agreed. This is another great thing about local government. I like that campaign contributions are limited to \$625 and would like to see this number even lower, perhaps to \$200. Money should not be a part of the equation for city council elections. Personal financial conflicts of interest by candidates should also be identified and addressed.

Principal #6 - Agreed. One of the things I loved about working in law enforcement was the opportunity to stand up for victims and seek justice for those who were unable to protect themselves from those who wanted to threaten, harass, intimidate, or otherwise harm them. If elected, I will continue to stand up for individual rights.

Principal #7 - See 1c.

***c. If there are one or more principles you do not endorse, please identify them and explain why.***

Principal #2 – As a retired detective who knows a thing or two about evidence, I have some issues with the wording “irrefutable evidence”. This brings to mind a grandstanding attorney (either prosecution or defense) trying to convince a jury that their position cannot be argued against.

I prefer the phrase the courts use in a criminal case, “proof beyond a reasonable doubt”. When investigating a situation, I must gather evidence and decide if that evidence amounts to the burden of proof. It is okay to move forward with reasonable doubt, and I must be open to changing my conclusion if that doubt increases beyond the scope of what is reasonable.

Evidence that amounts to overcoming this burden is still not “irrefutable”. Just consider cases that have been overturned by DNA testing long after a jury found there to be enough evidence to convict a person of a crime. If this evidence had been considered “irrefutable” a DNA test would have never happened because, based on the standard definition, the evidence would be impossible to deny.

So, I do disagree with this political principle and would like to see people with different views treated with respect as they build their case for their position on an issue.

Principal #7 - I believe both in individual freedom and communal responsibility, but I take issue with the words “always” and “never”. To be honest, the second sentence seems polarizing to me.

To be more inclusive, you could simply say, “We believe citizens can embrace both individual freedom and the responsibilities of being part of a greater community.” That is something I would agree with. This conveys the same message without claiming someone who believes in freedom as a fundamental human right, as I do, “never” talks about personal responsibility.

***3. It is important to let people know that you put the public interest first. In looking back over the past year, are there any decisions the Grand Junction City Council has made that you do not agree with? If yes, how would you have changed them?***

Yes, I disagreed with the city council's decision last year to put two issues on the ballot regarding a short-term rental tax and a lodging tax. Both of these taxes were put forward with the goal of raising money to subsidize affordable housing.

The most recent U.S. Census Bureau release (2020) states there are over 27K housing units in Grand Junction. The short-term rental data website AirDNA states there are currently "457 active short-term rentals in the Grand Junction area, with most of those being within city limits". So, looking at these numbers, short-term rentals make up about 1.6% of the housing in Grand Junction, and since the census data is three years old, and the AirDNA is current, I would venture a guess that the actual number is well under 1%.

Currently, the tax for a short-term rental in Grand Junction is:

- 3.25% for City sales/use tax
- 6.00% for City lodging tax
- 2.37% for Mesa County sales tax
- 2.90% for the State of Colorado sales tax
  - For a 14.52% total tax rate

If both of these ballot issues had passed it would have added 9% to the total tax rate making it 23.52%. To put this into perspective, for a \$150 per night rate it would add \$35.28, not counting the additional Airbnb fees. This puts the small business owner of an Airbnb within the city limits at a significant disadvantage to Airbnb's outside of the city limits they are competing with, so the cost hits the business owner's bottom line.

But the real issue here is that the council was trying to put the burden of the affordable housing subsidy on the shoulders of a small business, as if this group, controlling less than 1% of the houses in Grand Junction, was at fault for the lack of affordable housing. Couple this with the problem of having no real plan as to how the projected income from the taxes, estimated at \$1 million, would be deployed, and it makes these two ballot issues a bad idea in general.

I equate this plan to me driving down Pitkin Avenue with a friend in my passenger seat. As we approach the stoplight at 5<sup>th</sup>, I ask him for a \$20 bill, which he hands over to me. I then hand it out to a panhandler standing on the corner of Whitman Park. Now I feel better because I helped the "homeless problem", the guy on the corner feels better because he got \$20 for just holding out his hand, and my passenger is left wondering what in the heck just happened. The only thing for sure is that the local homelessness issue was left unchanged and the person who provide the money didn't get anything in return.

***4. In the aftermath of the January 6<sup>th</sup> insurrection, studies and security experts are citing increased risks to local governments from extremist groups who now target meetings of city councils and***

***school boards for potential violent protests and demonstrations around false election fraud and conspiracy theories.***

***a. How would you as a local government official push back against those who are undermining public confidence in free and fair elections?***

We are fortunate to live in a country where questions can be asked and systems can be challenged. This ability is critical to the success of our Democracy. If these questions and challenges fail to meet the criteria of proof beyond a reasonable doubt, it is time to move on. If elected, it will be my job to listen to every challenge and work with others to determine what issues need to be addressed, and which do not meet the burden of proof. I have an extremely high level of confidence in our local, county, and state elections, and while no election occurs with zero issues, I support the outcome of every election I have ever voted in.

That said, I take issue with the phrase “push back against those who are undermining public confidence in free and fair elections”. While I don’t believe the 2020 election was “stolen”, and I see the problem with “undermining public confidence in free and fair elections”, I think an equal danger to our republic is the idea that any government official would “push back against” someone who is exercising their constitutional right to freedom of speech, assembly, and the right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. Common sense should prevail while protecting constitutional rights. Each citizen has a right to be heard, and so long as the expression of their views does not violate the rights of others, they have a right to speak. And each has a right to an answer, even if that answer is not what he or she wants it to be.

When it comes to free and fair elections, the best policy is complete transparency. I believe our elections are managed with the transparency required to ask questions and be confident in the outcome. By encouraging dialogue in a nonpartisan way so questions can be answered, everyone can move on and focus on more important issues.

***b. What should be done to protect elected officials and the public from those using harassment to stop civil engagement and the exercise of democratic processes?***

As I said before, every citizen has a right to express his or her opinion, so long as that expression does not infringe upon the rights of others. Violence, intimidation, threats, and harassment infringe upon the rights of others. We have laws that protect elected officials and the public from harassment (CRS 18-9-111). I believe people who use harassment as a tactic to keep people from engaging in the democratic process should be charged and prosecuted. If this is done consistently, without preferential treatment based on politics or economic status, an example would be set that this type of behavior won’t be tolerated.

***5. The City of Grand Junction Charter provides that council elections are to be non-partisan. What do you think about local political party organizations supporting or opposing council candidates? Will you***

***reject political party endorsements and/or direct contributions to your campaign from political parties; why or why not?***

The non-partisan nature of our local election is very appealing to me. It means that voters need to look beyond the letter hanging at the end of someone's name in order to decide who to vote for. I do not oppose local political parties or organizations supporting or opposing council candidates, as these organizations' members value the opinions of their local leaders, and presumably, these leaders have done an investigation into a candidate prior to any endorsement. I would not object to an endorsement unless I received it from an organization I am morally opposed to, such as an organization that embraces racism. If representatives of the republican party, democrat party, League of Women Voters, Conservation Colorado, West Slope Colorado Oil & Gas Association, or Restore the Balance want to endorse me based on their own research, they should be free to do so.

As far as rejecting contributions to my campaign political parties or other organizations like those mentioned above, yes, I agree with that. If I am offered funds from these types of groups I will politely decline. I think taking money from any group can leave the impression of owing a political favor, and I am certainly against that.

***6. In the wake of the recent Orchard Mesa Pool controversy, the question of resolving multi-jurisdictional conflict has arisen.***

***a. What are your feelings regarding intergovernmental cooperation in the Grand Valley on this or other issues?***

Intergovernmental cooperation is critical. Just as the systems within our bodies are dependent on each other, and fail if one is non-functioning, so are our systems of government. We want and need each of these systems/governments to work well, and work well together. The recent debate about the OM Pool was sparked, in part, due to an apparent lack of alignment by our current city council. This brings to light a problem with our local intergovernmental cooperation; it's rather difficult to cooperate with other entities when you're not cooperating within your own council. I believe that issues within our own council should be resolved before trying to negotiate with another entity.

***b. What approach would you take in dealing with intergovernmental relations and resolving intergovernmental conflicts?***

A collaborative process is key in dealing with relations and conflicts between groups. If local government leaders and other stakeholders take the time to listen to the needs of the involved parties, while seeking a solution that can be mutually beneficial, consensus may be found. Transparency is key, as is teamwork among the individual groups (city council, county commissioners, school board).

***c. How would you protect Grand Junction's interests while still serving the most people in the most efficient and cost-effective way?***

Using the OM Pool as an example, I would determine what the most preferred outcome is for each of the involved parties (city council, county commissioners, school board, and beneficiaries of the pool) in their most simplistic terms. Once this is completed, associated costs and benefits should be analyzed, such as realistic projections for what is needed to bring the pool up to an acceptable condition. If the parties come to an impasse, efforts should be made to articulate exactly why a resolution isn't forthcoming, and decisions can be made from there.

An example of an impasse might be if the school district, which owns the OM Pool property, found the property where the pool and gym are located was needed by the middle school for an athletic field to the east of the track. If the school board stated this was the case, a discussion would take place as to why the space is needed (ie if there were a state law pertaining to space allocated for athletics) and communicated with transparency to the public. The city might bring a solution to the school board, proposing a swap of a portion of Eagle Rim Park, allowing District 51 to meet state requirements and for the pool to be acquired by the city. The county might decide to contribute a set amount of funds, but thereafter not be involved with the ownership or maintenance of the pool and gym.

One of the problems with the OM Pool situation is that there are outdated/expired intergovernmental contracts in place. This is a good example of why our local governments should work together to update agreements.

***7. Homelessness and affordable housing have been identified as problems in Grand Junction that affect large segments of our City's population; including young people, families and the elderly. What actions do you think the City should take to address these problems?***

Homelessness and affordable housing ARE problems in Grand Junction. The city should be involved in achieving solutions to these problems. I am glad the city is utilizing the \$10.4 million they received from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to fund solutions in this area. Catholic Outreach is going to receive \$1 million from these funds to help create 40 units of transitional housing in the heart of downtown. This project will be named Mother Teresa Place and will be utilized for getting individuals off the street. As Sister Karen says, "We end homelessness one person at a time."

The city can help with the affordable housing issue by utilizing and encouraging smart infill. By incentivizing additional dwelling units (ADUs) in strategic areas, and partnering with local businesses that are producing affordable, turnkey, ADUs, we could see a substantial increase in the number of housing units in key areas.

Additionally, the city can make changes to the zoning codes and allow more than four unrelated people to live in a home. Currently, a family of seven can live in a three-bedroom home, but five unrelated individuals cannot. Why? If the code were changed to allow up to two people per bedroom, they would immediately create more living space



and not be discriminating against individuals with differing familial status or relationships.

On a related note, I volunteer with the Grand Valley Resettlement Program as the housing coordinator and have identified and provided housing in Grand Junction for more than a dozen Afghan families in the past year. I also work closely with The Freedom Institute, which provides transitional housing for people coming out of the Colorado Department of Corrections, with what they call “lived experience”. Both of these nonprofits are doing important work in providing housing for people who face housing scarcity in our community.

Solutions regarding our housing crisis are multi-faceted. The city can certainly do a better job of getting out of the way when it comes to the enormous impact fees they levy on projects that increase our supply of housing units.

The City can also expand its funding to organizations like the Housing Authority and the Catholic Outreach, and utilize the expertise of charities like the Joseph Center which do great work for homeless/houseless people in our city. Increased funding for these organizations is a start, but also listening to their guidance regarding effective programs is important as well.

***8. Economic development is listed as one of Grand Junction’s strategic priorities. According to the City’s 2023 adopted budget summary, economic development spending will constitute 8% (\$19.5 million) of the total combined budget.***

***a. What means would you utilize to evaluate the merit and effectiveness of the city's economic development strategy?"***

Quite often, return on investments (ROI) can be measured, but not always. For example, the city currently invests \$79K into the Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP). GJEP was able to demonstrate a twenty-to-one ROI on this investment, based on quantifiable data.

But not all investment returns are so clearly calculated. The city’s investment in Visit Grand Junction was \$5.1 million last year. And while it’s estimated that visitors to Grand Junction brought in \$386.5 million to the Grand Junction economy in 2020 (the most recent data I found), it’s difficult to say how much was actually generated by the work Visit Grand Junction does. Despite this difficulty in projecting related ROIs, this type of investment still needs to be made.

I would evaluate the merit and effectiveness of the city's various programs promoting economic development in a quantitative manner whenever possible, but with an open mind to investing in programs where ROI is difficult to measure.

***b. What steps would you take to determine that the level of funding for the city's economic development strategy is appropriate or should be increased or decreased?***

By looking at the economic growth of Grand Junction, and appreciating that only a fraction of it is directly related to the city's economic development strategy/investment, I would carefully consider the potential return on investment (ROI) of funding provided.

As a real estate investor, I believe analysis should be done prior to investing. Determining historic ROI is key, and while past performance doesn't guarantee future returns, it can help with setting expectations. As Mark Twain once said, "History never repeats itself, but it does often rhyme."

In the example mentioned above regarding the city's investment of \$79K in GJEP, the estimated ROI is twenty-to-one or said another way, they are garnering a return of \$20 for every \$1 invested. Just imagine how the city could benefit if GJEP received something like \$500K per year from the city. This assumes that the return is quantifiable and the market conditions indicate positive future growth.

***c. If elected, how would you ensure that funding the city's economic development strategy is fair to new businesses, existing businesses, taxpayers who are not business owners, as well as well as pro-growth and no-growth interests?***

Fairness is important to me. It's also important to recognize that when a decision is made, there will often be opposition to the decision who may believe the outcome is unfair.

Ensuring the perception of fairness in the outcome of public policy is difficult, but ensuring fairness in the process is less so. Allowing stakeholders to voice concerns, or support is essential. Additionally, the public should have access to their elected representatives so they can express their views.

As far as being fair to both pro-growth and no-growth interests, we can only ensure a fair process, as these interests are in opposition to each other. If solutions can be found that address the concerns of both sides, so much the better.

One example of the city's economic development strategy that has been cited as unfair to an existing business is the council's recent decision to waive \$2.4 million in impact fees for an out-of-town developer (Richmark from Greeley, CO). I spoke with another developer, who owns a new \$17 million, 78-unit apartment project on 10th Street and Grand Avenue, called the Lofts on Grand. She clearly thought it was unfair that her impact fees weren't waived as well. But upon further examination, I learned her construction project was being funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which is contributing \$13 million to the project. In addition to this, the Grand Junction Downtown Development Authority (DDA) provided a \$490K

grant to assist with the teardown and mitigation of a building that previously existed on the property.

I refer to this example because while one developer received incentives by way of fees being waived by the city, the other developer utilized other incentives. So, while the second developer may complain about the “fairness” of the city’s process, a business decision was made by both developers to move forward with their respective projects. In both cases, the additional housing units benefit the community’s housing needs.

I can only say that I would certainly listen to anyone opposing something like a housing project or investing in infrastructure. I am pro-growth and believe that a thriving economy is good for everyone in Grand Junction. As they say, “A rising tide lifts all boats.”

***9. Are there City expenditures that you think could be reduced without sacrificing City residents’ quality of life or fiscal responsibility? Are there City expenditures that you think should be increased?***

I think the city tends to hire consultants to help them make decisions far too often. I believe the City should at least talk with local stakeholders and receive feedback from them prior to hiring consultants to help them make large financial decisions.

One area that the city should spend more money on is police and fire department salaries. But this could be done by restructuring the way the money flows through the department’s budgets. Currently, the salary savings the department experiences due to being short-staffed flow back out of the department’s budgets and into the city’s general fund. So, in a way, the city profits from running the department short-staffed (I am not implying the staffing shortage is intentional). If this money could be used to pay recruitment and retention bonuses and to provide compensation packages commensurate with what other large agencies in the state are paying, the city would benefit.

***10. What do you feel are three OTHER important issues and or concerns facing the City of Grand Junction and what solutions do you have in mind?***

Important issue #1 - Public Safety (GJPD, GJFD, & Regional Communications Center)

**GJPD:** Our current staffing for the police department is at unacceptable levels. The following is from a commentary I wrote on January 21st.

“GJPD is authorized for 142 sworn staff, but currently (January 2023) only has 104 sworn staff. In addition to patrol officers, the sworn staff includes administrators, detectives, school resource officers, community resource unit officers, traffic officers, and college officers. The current number of patrol officers in Grand Junction that are responding to 911 calls for service? 52. 52 cops patrolling a city of 67K!

And of that 52, there are often only about 6 or 7 on duty at a time, with many officers working more than 50 hours per week on an ongoing basis due to the shortage of personnel. Note: The “cost-savings” of the unused salaries from the police budget currently flow back into the city’s general fund, rather than staying within the department’s accessible funds. Changing this would give the police department more capital to incentivize lateral hires and to give retention bonuses.”

City Council’s role in addressing this issue: First and foremost, this needs to be recognized as the crisis that it is. The citizens of Grand Junction deserve to have a police department that can respond as required in an emergency and to have officer staffing levels that allow proactive policing to take place. The council can start by working with GJPD’s command staff to put together a strategic list of priorities pertaining to recruitment and retention. These priorities would be tasked to a group that would include a city council member, City Manager Caton, Chief Smith, Human Resources Director Shelley Caskey, and the police sergeant overseeing the recruitment process. This group would meet on a monthly basis until GJPD achieves full staffing. Accountability pertaining to targeted recruitment, hiring incentives, and retention are key.

**GJFD:** The Grand Junction Fire Department is currently considering a merger with the Clifton Fire Protection District. In a recent conversation I had with City Manager Caton and Fire Chief Watkins, the move seemed like a foregone conclusion. Chief Watkins told me that there had been a “thirty-year discussion” and that the fire chief of Clifton had asked the Grand Junction Fire Department to “move forward.” Chief Watkins explained that with the projected revenues it was deemed “viable” by the consultant but they would probably need nine more personnel so that two more ambulances could be added.

To get a broader perspective I talked with some friends I have in the local fire service about this possibility. What I learned from them was that in order to provide Clifton with the level of fire protection currently provided to Grand Junction, the GJFD would need to hire a lot more firefighters, significantly more than the nine I was told about during the above-mentioned meeting. The GJFD is currently struggling to hire and retain adequate personnel due to at least in part to their current wage and benefit package. Note: The GJFD is currently the second lowest-paid agency in the state among those polled for comparison by the city for wage analysis, with Pueblo being the lowest.

If the City of Grand Junction moves forward with this merger before they have adequate staffing in place, there will likely be serious consequences for public safety within the City of Grand Junction. These consequences could include the continued operation of Station 5 (Redlands) without an ambulance and with too few firefighters to offensively fight a structure fire, based on national standards (NFPA 1710). Additionally, GJFD Station 7, which is scheduled to be built in 2024, and opened later that same year, will not likely happen for several more years. One other concern I heard voiced was the potential of 2B funds being used to fund Clifton fire protection. Measure 2B, also known as the First Responders Tax, was passed in 2019 and added 0.5 percent to the city's sales tax. These funds were earmarked for Grand Junction's police and fire

departments to better staff each agency and add new fire stations.

Stakeholders, like our local firefighters, need to have a seat at the table when decisions like this are made. As I mentioned in my answer to question number nine, "I think the city tends to hire consultants to help them make decisions far too often. I believe the City should at least talk with local stakeholders and receive feedback from them prior to hiring consultants to help them make large financial decisions."

**Regional Communications Center:** Our current staffing level for the communication center, aka dispatch, is currently at 50%. Last week I spoke with Police Chief Matt Smith about this issue and he told me it has been particularly challenging to hire dispatchers and an effort is being made to work with local high schools to encourage graduating seniors to apply for dispatch positions as the minimum age for a dispatcher is eighteen years of age. This is yet another critical lynchpin in the public safety network our community relies upon. I like Chief Smith's idea about marketing to younger applicants, and I would expand on this by offering scholarship opportunities in partnership with Colorado Mesa University. These scholarships could be specific to the criminal justice program.

#### Important issue #2 – **The Orchard Mesa Pool.**

The Orchard Mesa Pool was addressed in question number six, but I believe it's worth addressing here as it's something our community clearly cares about. Additionally, how the City of Grand Junction resolves this issue can frame how they resolve similar issues in the future.

I recently received a survey question from the "Save The Pool Committee", asking, *"If elected, will you commit to work with other members of the Grand Junction City Council to respect the Orchard Mesa Pool Community, the Community of Orchard Mesa, and the Community of Grand Junction, by investing in an effort to find a solution that keeps an indoor pool operating (limiting the cost to \$6 million dollars or less) in Orchard Mesa now and in the foreseeable future, regardless if the community recreation center passes or not?"*

This was my response: Thank you for reaching out to me regarding this important issue. Like many of you, I have fond memories of both the Orchard Mesa Pool and the attached gymnasium. If elected, I will commit to working with other members of the city council and our community to resolve this issue in a way that keeps the pool and gym open, if at all possible, regardless of what happens with the Community Recreation Center (I do hope it passes). What I cannot do, without knowing how the money will be obtained, is to commit to spending \$6 million dollars, or less, of our community's tax dollars on the project without knowing two things.

First, will the school district release this property to the City of Grand Junction's ownership? Since School District 51 owns the property, we need to know that they will

transfer title to the City of Grand Junction before we spend a significant amount of money revitalizing the pool.

Second, where will this money come from? Within the City of Grand Junction's 2023 Recommended Budget of \$235.9 million you would think we could find the \$6 million you reference, but I would want to be sure we can do it before I make you a promise. Quite frankly, I think it can be done by finding ways to cut the budget in other areas, obtaining money from grants, and perhaps raising private money in our community. I will commit to partnering with you to work on finding a solution to fund this project.

Important issue #3 - There is a problem in our community that everyone seems to be talking about. **Housing.**

I am a firm believer in the free market and do not believe that government-owned housing projects are the answer. But local government can do some things to ease the pain of this affordable/attainable housing shortage in two ways.

1) Get out of the way. Zoning, impact fees, and slow planning/rezoning processes add costs and risks for builders. The cost portion of this equation is obvious, but the added risk comes when an investor/builder makes a decision based on current market conditions but the local government process is so slow that market conditions can dramatically change by the time the units are on the market.

2) Incentivize the type of workforce housing that has been identified as a critical need. Let's face it, there's a reason that local builders build a certain type of house at a certain price point. They are running a business and must be profitable to stay in business. If the City of Grand Junction would sharpen their respective pencils, and figure out how to best incentivize local builders, to at least make it a cost-neutral decision to build workforce housing, they would likely increase the number of affordable housing units. We also can't let impact fees get in the way of "smart infill". Incentives should nudge homeowners to add ADUs or rent out additional space, not make it more difficult.

Both of these points are examples of how a public/private partnership might work effectively. Our local government can and should encourage innovative construction methods and look for ways to provide economic incentives for mixed-income housing developments.

Both public safety and housing are tied to the third prong of my platform, which is to address homeless/houseless, vagrancy, mental health, and addiction in our community.