

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.

I have served Grand Junction on the City Council for four years, including one as Mayor *pro tem* and currently as Mayor. During that time, I have participated in the Colorado Municipal League's Muniversity program and have attended numerous CML educational events and conferences. I also had the privilege to attend the Harvard Kennedy School's three-week Executives in State and Local Government program as a fellow of the Gates Family Foundation in 2022, during which I learned about effective local governance and policy-making alongside people from across the country of diverse political leanings.

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?

Yes

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

I will continue to serve Grand Junction as an unaffiliated voter who models the principles of moderation, cooperation, and humility that are embodied in the RTB principles.

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

As a member of the Council, it would be inappropriate for me to criticize decisions made by the Council that I may not have agreed with. I advocate during the deliberative process for what I believe to be the best policy or strategy, but when the Council votes as a body, the prevailing position is the body's position and I believe it is my duty to accept the decision of the majority as *our* decision, even when I voted in the minority.

4. In the aftermath of the January 6th 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?

I lived through this during my time as Mayor *pro tem* and was part of the process to bring elections in-house at the City. Part of this decision was informed by the desire to separate the City from the political rhetoric and controversy of the Tina Peters Clerk's Office and de-politicize city elections. As Mayor, I rejected requests by two former candidates to discuss initiating a recount of the 2021 municipal election 18 months after its conclusion (the deadline to request a recount is 37 days) under their stated pretext of "future confidence in local elections". Entertaining such a request would have given air time to false claims and wasted the public resources we steward.

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?

The state has taken proactive steps to enact laws to this effect, and our local law enforcement agencies monitor activity that may rise to the level of threats or violence against elected officials and elections staff. These efforts and clear, enforced policies at the local government level regarding appropriate public participation in meetings, safety at voting sites and ballot boxes, and harassment are the baseline for protecting those public servants and members of the public. Law enforcement in these cases is a critical tool for safeguarding the public's access to its democratic systems.

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?

I do not have a strong opinion about local party endorsements of council elections, though I do believe candidates should not use those endorsements to tacitly politicize their races or tout support of parties to construe their own "unspoken" party affiliation.

I am not seeking party endorsements or direct contributions to my campaign from political parties.

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?

It would be inappropriate for me to comment on this issue as a party to the matter while negotiations are ongoing.

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

One of my priorities as Mayor and Mayor *pro tem* has been improving the City's relationships across the alley with County officials. Despite inherited conflicts between the two bodies and a prevalent belief held by some that our interests were often in opposition to each other, the Council and Board of Commissioners of 2021 to now have forged very effective working relationships. We recognize that our geography has intertwined our fates and our fortunes, and that cooperation is vital to our valley's success. I have developed deliberate, strong, and respectful individual relationships with county commissioners and county staff, which has dramatically improved our cooperation and collaboration for the benefit of the broader community. We still have points of disagreement and do not always agree on policy approaches or strategies, but we have worked hard to establish trust and can disagree without disrespecting. Recognizing that all governments are made up of people, I have worked and will continue to work to have respectful relationships with civil servants from other jurisdictions to deal effectively with intergovernmental matters and to keep negative personal sentiments out of the public discourse.

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

I am not sure what you mean by this broad and vague question, as this is essentially the core role of local government that we work to achieve every day. I would be happy to answer this more in-depth with clarification about what the question is referring to more specifically.

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?

The City should continue to work to accomplish the goals of the City's Housing Strategy, working closely with local housing partners, including the Grand Junction Housing Authority, Housing Resources of Western Colorado, Habitat for Humanity, and developers, among others. The City should also complete the Zoning & Development Code update that is currently in progress to clarify code requirements, remove barriers to development, and ensure that units are erected without any unnecessary delays due to City approval processes. The City

should also continue to evaluate opportunities to facilitate and, when appropriate, incentivize the development of attainable housing.

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?"

In late 2021, we asked our ED partners for better reporting about the ROI of City and County dollars used for economic development strategies through those organizations. GJEP recently released a memo showing economic impact indicators, which should be used as a model for other ED partners to demonstrate their impact and be accountable to taxpayers.

- 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?

Economic development is one of the many needs of the city and must be balanced with other priorities established by the Council and city administration. Impact reports from ED partners and other economic indicators should be weighed against budget performance and available revenues to determine appropriate levels of investment in any given year. Investment in economic development is currently funded by multiple sources, including the general fund, which could be increased or decreased based on economic performance, requests to invest in projects of merit, leverage of state/federal funding, and the business climate.

- 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?

Local economic development strategies are developed and implemented by our ED partners, and as such are not Council-driven strategies, so this question is better posed to GJEP, the Chamber, the Business Incubator, and the Latino Chamber.

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?

There are always more needs than resources in a city, so every city must budget based on its priorities each year. The City's budgetary processes are guided by the Strategic Priorities established by the City Council every two years. The current budget reflects those priorities and was developed to meet the current needs of the community, as well as provide for future needs, such as infrastructure and wastewater. I believe our expenditures are appropriate at current levels based on the Strategic Priorities and many planning documents the City has worked hard to create (e.g. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan; Circulation Plan; Housing Strategy; Comprehensive Plan, etc.)

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?