

Robert Ballard's responses to the "Restore the Balance" questionnaire.

1. I read and considered the 7 principles listed for your organization, and while I can endorse all of them, I have reservations about some of the qualifiers. I will explain those first then detail how I plan to execute these principles.

First, I agree completely that we need to find common ground (values) to solve problems, but I disagree with the statement that "Gridlock is not an option". This is because I believe a person must have either resolute principles or commit to avoiding gridlock at all costs. We can use "Restore the Balance" as an example. Say half of the members of the board decided to support an extremist ideology, should the other half give in to avoid gridlock? Of course not, that would violate the organizations principles.

The other phrase that I had questions about was "Extremists always talk about 'freedom,' but never mention the responsibility to the community that comes with it." This sentiment was also often used as a coercion technique when raising taxes, passing legislation, and talking about COVID policy. That said, I think there are inherent risks and responsibilities to living in a free society, most of which can be addressed through voluntary participation as a community rather than coercion.

As for the rest of "Restore the Balance's" principles, I have no problem endorsing them. I plan to work with community leaders to ensure that we address voters' concerns with evidence and respect. I will listen to ALL Mesa County voters regardless of their political affiliation to ensure everyone can trust their election system. I am always open to discuss and debate ideas. Finally, I will continue to encourage civic participation from everyone in our community so we can strive for a more perfect local government.

2. There are a couple things I learned working with the Clerk & Recorder's office over the last year. First, our elections are secure. Second, it's thanks to the vast skill and decades of experience of our staff. However, what they really need right now is leadership. They need someone who will be accountable, responsible, and knows the implications of their decisions. I have that ability. My thirteen years in the military has given me the experience of being responsible for millions of dollars of equipment and making decisions that carry the weight of our national security. My bachelor's degree in management has taught me how to work with different personalities and how to apply people's strengths to everyone's advantage. My perspective as a business owner gives me insight how regulatory burden can make it harder for small businesses to succeed. Finally, I've spent the better part of the last year learning the processes of the office, developing relationships of the staff, and learning how to apply my experience to improve the Clerk & Recorder's office for our community.

3. I think the election results in 2020 were legitimate and I hope to work with community leaders to help satisfy any concerns people may have.
4. No process will ever be perfect but we should always try for a more perfect system. This award winning election team is constantly making small changes that make things more secure and transparent. My first priority will be completing the state level election certification, then enrolling in the National certification. This is a common first step for new election employees. My second priority is refining our election process in preparation for the 2023 and 2024 elections. This includes bringing ballot design back 'in house' so we can save taxpayers money and streamline election preparation. Finally, I want to develop a long-term plan that will allow our funding to accommodate the eb and flow of our economy and the growth of the grand valley.
5. I believe our election workers mostly feel safe and free from intimidation, however, it is the job of any Clerk & Recorder to ensure this remains constant. Community involvement will be important to accomplish this. These workers aren't lackies from the Secretary of State's office or the presidential administration. They are our neighbors, friends, and family. They care deeply about having a free and fair election and are always open to answering questions. I think it is important for the Clerk & Recorder to make that clear to the public especially those who have concerns about elections.
6. As a minor party candidate I find myself constantly working with people not in my party. I have worked with both sides to address the concerns the people of Mesa County have. For those on the right, I have been open and willing to hear their concerns and find solutions that satisfy them. For those on the left, I have addressed their concerns regarding extremist insiders interfering with the election. Most of all I have made it clear that I want all sides to trust our election system regardless of party affiliation, and I will prove its integrity while being transparent and remaining within my authority.
7. I have actually discussed with election officials ways we can help minor party and unaffiliated voters have more agency in the election system. I would like to see more unaffiliated/minor party election judges and more fairness in ballot access for unaffiliated and minor party candidates. As a minor party candidate myself I support helping unaffiliated voters have more opportunities to participate in their government.
8. I mentioned this in a prior answer, but we need better planning. We have seen the closing and reopening of our motor vehicle offices in recent years. Sometimes it was due low staffing and other time it was because of funding. Both, I think, can be directly related to long-term planning on the part of the Clerk & Recorder and the County Commissioners. I want to present a plan that will adjust to the fluctuations in the economy and the growth of the Grand Valley.