

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR DELTA COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
ELECTION: NOVEMBER 5, 2024

**PRESENTED BY RESTORE THE BALANCE, DELTA COUNTY**  
**a nonpartisan, nonprofit, organization**

PLEASE RETURN YOUR RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE NOT LATER THAN  
5:00 P.M. ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024 BY EMAIL TO:  
**rtbdeltacounty@gmail.com**

**To: Candidates for Delta County Commissioner**  
**Delta County, Colorado**

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- 1- What qualifications do you have that can give voters confidence that you should be elected to serve as a Delta County Commissioner? Please be specific.

I have a good head on my shoulders, I know how to balance a checkbook, I'm willing to stand up and fight for you when tyranny raises its head, and I can be very resourceful and creative when it comes to solving complex problems. I appreciate when elected officials and representatives read and understand legislation before voting to pass it, and intend to do so myself. I serve no special interests and have no desire to be a career politician. I come from a genuine desire to serve you, the people of Delta County, and this beautiful land we all call Home, as a civil servant with a mission to serve all the people, not a select few.

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- 2- What personal values are the most important for public officials?

Integrity. Humility. Accountability. Being open to hearing and considering diverse opinions.

- a. Please provide examples of activities you have been involved in that express those values.

I became an Eagle Scout over 30 years ago, and the process of earning that badge laid a foundation of striving to be an upstanding individual as much as possible.

Integrity – once I found several hundred dollars while cleaning up the basement of a previous job. Could have pocketed it, but passed it on to the boss, who had no clue it was ever missing.

Humility – this is hard to describe in terms of an activity, as it’s more of an ongoing process of working towards mastery in one skill or another, but always remaining in the mindset of a student – though I may know more than someone else, there are always those who know more than I do.

Accountability – all of those times I had to say yes, I messed up.

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- 3- Upon reading and considering 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?
  - b. Please explain how you will work to execute these principles as a County Commissioner if you are elected.
  - c. If there are any principles you do not endorse, please identify them and explain why.

For the most part, yes, I endorse these principles and agree with their intent.

1. *Political parties, citizens and elected officials should vigorously compete over values, principles and ideas, but must also find common ground to solve problems and pass needed legislation.*

1. This is the way we achieve harmony, and I will hold this principle as a fundamental guideline for political activity, as the art of politics is compromise.

2. *Facts, supported by objectively examined evidence, are the basis for what to believe and how to act.*

2. As your county commissioner, I will seek facts in every situation, review related documents, and serve from a basis of truth. Additionally, I will strive to maintain my current ability to spread both of my wings wide, and be able to understand and communicate with those across the spectrum, including those who may be at the extreme ends of Left and Right.

3. *No one person or political party has a monopoly on the best public policy proposals; communication and good faith negotiations are essential to the legislative process.*

3. As an Independent candidate, I come to the table with no Party baggage and a sincere desire to serve this beautiful land and the wonderful people who live here; from that basis, I will intently listen to all people who speak up for one matter or another – especially when they present an opposing view. I think it’s very important to remember, when determining public policy that will

affect many, that though the policy maker's ideas may be very good indeed, there is always the possibility that someone unexpected has a better idea, and maybe we should listen. In terms of good faith, I will retain – as long as possible – this sense of naive innocence that allows me to inherently trust all those with whom I interact, believing that all parties are operating in good faith. For me, betrayal of that inherent trust leads to rash actions, such as running for public office.

*4. The public interest must come before party interests, for voters and elected officials alike.*

4. Absolutely agree with this one, which is one of the primary reasons I run as an Independent candidate. As mentioned in no. 3, I'm offering to serve the people, no matter who you vote for to be President, or any another office. The local matters of public interest affect us all – a pothole doesn't care if you're Red or Blue.

*5. Extremists of all kinds attract supporters and money by appealing to fears and resentments, amplifying divisions instead of truly addressing problems.*

5. This does not seem like a "principle" to me, but I do agree with it as a general statement of observation of certain recent situations. We should consider that not all who appear to be at extreme reaches of the political spectrum are interested in fear and resentment, some are just sick of having to deal with a system that is broken in so many aspects and they feel impotent to fix any of it. Rather than look at the extremities of a line with finite ends, why not look at them as points upon a circumference, and then, let us step into the middle of the circle and see each person and their perspective from there. I understand that people are angry, for myriad reasons, but my job will be to not take anger into the boardroom, and try to be aware of the differing perspectives as well as the root of those fears.

*6. Citizens should be free to run for or hold office without being threatened or harassed.*

6. Yes. This is common sense and I support that.

*7. Citizens may certainly exercise their personal freedoms, but they may not ignore their personal responsibilities to the community at large.*

7. Personal responsibility is the absolute foundation of freedom. And so far in this life, it appears to be the most difficult thing to master. As your Commissioner, I will encourage folks to practice both sides of this equation, and strive as much as I possibly can to set a good example with my own life, and take accountability for all actions I make in an official capacity.

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- 4- It is important to let people know that you put the public interest first. In looking back over the past year or two, are there any decisions the Delta County Commissioners have made with which you do not agree? If yes, how would you change them?

Yes, and I will address only a few:

1. At the BOCC meeting of March 21, 2023, the county received a grant to produce an “Innovative Housing Plan” or “affordable housing strategy,” and awarded the contract to the lowest bidder – a design firm that specializes in ski resorts and recreational planning. Though I have no doubt that this firm has a firm grasp on how to include affordable housing for workers and support staff when designing a ski resort, I have low confidence in their ability to develop such a strategy that is appropriate for the unique needs of our rural area.

Rather than send \$40,000 out of Delta Co. (\$30k grant and \$10k from County), I would have hired local minds, skills, and talent, with perhaps an expert to aid them, to develop this strategy for our future and kept that money circulating in our local economy for at least a few more rounds. In fact, I asked the BOCC to do just that during constituent time of that March meeting. My suggestion was dismissed, with the remark that grants only go to what they called the “contractor class.”

2. The Land Use Code. Though the LUC does have many very good bits at this point and I do have many issues with the document itself, my concern lies more within the process that brought that document into existence. Hundreds of people stood up, spoke out, and asked for the process to slow down. But all these people were written off as a “special interest group,” their voices, for the most part, ignored. Two well-attended public hearings were held, yet the outcome of each hearing had been pre-determined before the evening ever came to pass.

Rather than play the tyrant and ignore the voice of the people, I’m going to start some new conversations. I know that it is impossible to please every person all the time, but I also know that it is possible to hear the voices of those who don’t want to eat what we’re dishing up.

3. Last year, There was that one time where they spent over a hundred thousand dollars (some sources say \$300k) of county money to improve a private driveway. In that case, I hope I would have noticed the anomaly while reading the Agenda Packet before the meeting that signed that contract or made that agreement, and in the meeting, made the anomaly known.

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- 5- In the aftermath of recent political events, some security experts cite increased risks to local governments from groups which pose a threat to the right to peacefully assemble and to the proper functioning of government.

- a. As a County Commissioner, how would you expect to deal with threats of political violence including disruption of County Commissioner meetings?

In the past two years, we have seen a few occasions where numerous individuals showed up to speak to our County Commissioners in a rather energetic manner. Though some of their words were rude and/or of a violent nature, not one of them was a physical threat to any other person. They were present and they spoke their truth. These are the People of Delta County. We may be passionate, but we are peaceful. All we want is for the government to actually listen.

If, as your County Commissioner, I am making choices that are causing hundreds of residents to rise up and tell me to stop, you can bet I'm going to stop pursuing that trajectory and start having some real conversations.

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

First – who are these people who are “using harassment”? If outside forces show up here in an attempt to stop civil engagement, our local citizens know how to show up in force and send them back home. Part of my job as county commissioner will be to keep the peace and maintain order in meetings. I will do my part to cultivate an atmosphere of openness in which people feel safe and know they are being heard.

- 6- Delta County uses mail-in ballots. Do you feel this method serves the public interest?

Yes. It would be better if we had more accessible polling places and every voter could come and vote in person. Maybe we should go back to that. But as we are, I think mail-in ballots do provide a benefit to a rural community like ours. Election Day used to be a thing. Why not make it a holiday? Bring people together, have food and music at the polling place. Celebrate our constitutional right to elect our leaders. Voting in person is better, and reminds us that we are a community.

- 7- Do you feel county government in the recent past has been moving in the correct direction?

No. The county's budgeted expenditures have doubled since 2020, with multiple tax increases, though cumulative population growth in the same time is only 1.3% (according to available Census and budget data), and neither has mean household income increased in a substantial amount. In 2020, our \$31.5 million budget was balanced, this year it's over \$13 million out of balance in the wrong direction (though it is “balanced” by pulling from reserves, some of which

were held for that very purpose). County budget should only grow as the population and its income does.

- a. What additional steps would you promote to maximize serving the interests of Delta County in an efficient and cost-effective manner?

Encourage trade schools and apprenticeship programs. Let's give our kids some real ammunition to stick around. Armed with skills and certifications, they can serve our local areas. I would like to see our children no longer be Delta County's top export.

Make a conscious attempt to examine every year's budget and drill down to the actual cost-benefit analysis for the common taxpayer.

Encourage local economic growth, support local producers, small farms, and home businesses. A single dollar bill can circulate indefinitely, so long as it is not carved down by transaction fees.

A workable definition of what is considered to be "Commercial" in the LUC. The current definition is this: "Commercial – with reference to categories of land uses, means a group of land uses that involve general commercial activity."

Explore the idea of a Home Rule Charter for Delta Co. That may be what we need to have more say in our local future. We could consider such a Charter as our "County Constitution."

- 8- What do you feel are three important issues and/or concerns facing Delta County and what solutions do you have in mind?

8.1 – Housing has become unaffordable for so many of our working folk, including so many who grew up here, which only exacerbates the more important issue, which is that Delta County's biggest export is our kids. Too many of our children don't see how they can afford a life here, nor are they seeing enough of the opportunities that a life here can provide. I want to see trade schools and apprenticeship programs. I want to see our young folk learning real and practical skills that they can put to work anywhere they go, and they can make a fine living right here as well. Let us cultivate spaces of practical learning, as well as encourage new industry, here, from the ground up. This can serve a number of goals, help keep our kids home, and create a new generation of craftsmen to build their own homes.

8.2 – Why has our county budget grown so much these past four years? And why in such a disproportionate manner to the growth of county population and mean household income? Where is the effect and benefit of these additional services?

8.3 - State mandates are often out of alignment with our county reality. Time and again we are forced to pay for projects or programs we do not necessarily want nor need. Let's explore a Home Rule Charter to potentially take back our destiny and let our county government be more in line with our rural values, rather than the needs of large cities.

Thanks for your help in encouraging public participation in our election process.

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE BY 5:00 P.M. ON  
SEPTEMBER 30, 2024 TO:**

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## RESTORE THE BALANCE - PRINCIPLES

We must do more than simply be against extremism. We must act against it whenever we can. We embrace the following set of principles to govern political conduct by candidates and citizens alike. WE BELIEVE THAT:

8. Political parties, citizens and elected officials should vigorously compete over values, principles and ideas, but must also find common ground to solve problems and pass needed legislation.
9. Facts, supported by objectively examined evidence, are the basis for what to believe and how to act.
10. No one person or political party has a monopoly on the best public policy proposals; communication and good faith negotiations are essential to the legislative process.
11. The public interest must come before party interests, for voters and elected officials alike.
12. Extremists of all kinds attract supporters and money by appealing to fears and resentments, amplifying divisions instead of truly addressing problems.
13. Citizens should be free to run for or hold office without being threatened or harassed.
14. Citizens may certainly exercise their personal freedoms, but they may not ignore their personal responsibilities to the community at large.