

## **Chris Elias's Responses to the Restore the Balance Survey Durango City Council Race**

**1. Why are you running for Durango City Council? What qualifications do you bring?**

I have worked in this town paycheck to paycheck, I know how hard it is to live in this town. I want to help give a voice for the working class. I feel the city focuses on projects, business, and tourism that we sometimes overlook the people that keep this town running. I honestly do not know what qualifies a person to run for city council. I have been in the working class the majority of my life. I know the hardships that the working class face. I have had personal experiences not being able to pay bills because of an injury or an emergency expense. I am currently a business owner who has had a low turnover rate by having great leadership and strong communication skills. I address the needs of my employees. When they come to me with a problem, I try not to tell them what to do, but instead discuss the issue and figure out the best way to solve the problem as a team. While I might have my short comings as a public speaker, as I have recently found out at public forums, I am a great listener. This is my first experience running for public office and I want to be here to listen to the public, have important discussions, and ultimately be a voice for the people who make Durango such a great community.

**2. Do you agree with the seven principles Restore the Balance feels should guide political conduct in Colorado? If you do not agree with one or more of these principles, please identify and explain why.** Yes I do

**3. How will you support the Durango City Council's strategic plan objective to "Foster strong community group partnerships through effective communication and a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity efforts while focusing on increased accessibility of services for underserved communities?"** I love the inclusiveness of this town and will always support community groups and organizations. Peoples sexual orientation and race has no effect on their character in my opinion, and we need to continue to be inclusive to understand different perspectives. It is my hope as Durango continues to grow we begin see more diversity spread throughout our community.

**4. If elected, what actions will you take to help find common ground with your fellow elected officials?** I believe we all want what is best for Durango and its people. Not everyone is going to agree on the topics at hand, but as a city council member I am acting as a voice for our community. I think its important to listen and respect each other. I want to create an effective communication style that works for all of us while keeping the the character of Durango intact.

**5. If elected, how will you listen to and represent the concerns of constituents who don't agree with you?** I will listen with open ears, I understand I do not know everything. Occasionally we look at things with blinders on and can only see what's in

front of us. I like to hear others perspective and see things from a different angle. Listening and learning from others makes me grow as a person and I am always seeking to better myself.

6. **What do you perceive as the top three issues facing Durango that you propose to address, and how would you address those issues if elected?** Pay Increase- I know the city is currently doing a study on a 15% pay increase. I would personally like to talk to small businesses, organizations, and non-profits to see how a minimum wage increase would affect their operations. The city is always pushing for affordable housing, but who is going to be able to buy these homes without a reasonable pay? We need the workforce in this town to be able to live comfortably while working in the restaurants, the bike shops, the mountain, etc. Affordable housing- I know the city is addressing the issue, but we need to keep pushing. Unfortunately, this is a slow moving process. I think we need to work and communicate with the county to see if there are ways we can create developments to alleviate the demand. Infrastructure- I have lived in other areas of the country and whether it was a red state or a Blue state it seemed like their infrastructure and roads were crumbling. When I look around Colorado I see our tax dollars at work. We have great roads, state parks, sidewalks, and maintenance. I think we are lucky and need to keep this standard up.
7. **Multiple individuals were convicted by our judicial system for their illegal activities on January 6th. Do you support the president's action to commute sentences for specific individuals and the full and complete pardon of all other participants?** I do not support the President. I do find it unfortunate that some leaders of this country duped citizens into believing that a fair election was stolen. Some of those leaders still push the idea that it was stolen. Regardless that does not give citizens the right to storm the capital, attack police officers, and threaten our politicians.
8. **Is there a current policy, platform plank(s), or pieces of legislation that the Durango City Council has endorsed or supported that you disagree with? Why?** I currently disagree with the city council and the city manager strongly informed the county that 911 services will be billed 25% higher outside of city limits. I know there had previously been a disagreement with the county and the sheriffs, but I do not believe this is the way of going about resolving the issue. It is comparable to the current administrations approach to tariffs, it is only hurting our people and our neighbors.