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**RE: Ralph (Ben) Scanga | Poncha Springs Mayor Candidate Questionnaire Responses**

1. In a few sentences, please briefly share why you're motivated to run for public office, and why you believe you're qualified to serve in this context. (your response will be printed on the in-person Forum Program).
  - I have always been drawn to public service, as a young school aged person I volunteered as part of Boy Scouts, 4H, and other youth programs. I found that while the work was hard at times it was also rewarding when you saw the good your efforts brought to the community. As I became an adult I wanted to be a part of shaping our community. Having the experience of growing up here in Chaffee County I felt my knowledge of our history and how growth and change had affected other small mountain communities I wanted to use that knowledge to help prevent our area from making some of the mistakes I saw made in other towns.
  - I served as the county chairman of the Chaffee County Republican party for three years and gained a lot of knowledge on how our political systems affect our lives. Then in 2009 I was appointed to the Poncha Springs Planning and Zoning board and really enjoyed learning the process of town government. I was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2012 and served as Mayor Pro-Tem for four years. In 2016 I was elected Mayor and again in 2019. This will be my third term as Mayor and I am very proud of the strides our town has made.
  
2. I support changing codes and processes towards increased use of Administrative decisions by public sector staff, while focusing public input on changes to the code itself.
  - Somewhat Disagree
  
3. Development approval times are:
  - Prohibitively slow, thereby discouraging development

4. As you are likely aware, the Chaffee County 2020 Comp Plan stated, “keep the country country and the towns towns”. What does this statement mean to you and how would you use this guiding principle in setting land use policy?
  - To me it means to ensure that the rural lifestyles can continue outside of the municipalities ie. ranching, growing hay, dirt roads, horseback competitions, hunting, an understanding that things may get dusty, smelly, and loud at times. The towns are allowed to add amenities, make decisions as to how and where they grow. As Mayor of Poncha Springs this would not be a guiding principle for our land use policy, we have our own policies and ideas of what is beneficial to our town.
5. The Town’s government is sufficiently connected to, and collaborative with, the school district.
  - Strongly Disagree
6. How can the Town’s government encourage/support/facilitate increasing work-based learning programs for local youth?
  - Number one, be open to the idea. Number two, work to bring in diverse businesses that may provide apprenticeship type employment. Number three, help identify locations for a vo tech school.
7. Passing a local ordinance requiring the installation of broadband infrastructure as a part of all new development is a must.
  - Somewhat Agree
8. Internet infrastructure should be treated as equally important to other utilities (water, sewer, gas, electricity) in infrastructure projects.
  - Somewhat Agree
9. What is local government’s role in increasing broadband availability and reliability for the community?
  - Our role is to work with internet providers to help make it economically beneficial for them to increase service. Local governments don't need a direct benefit financially, the benefit comes with the economic development that high speed internet makes possible and attractive.
10. [BV/Poncha] has enough water to meet municipal, housing, and commercial development growth.
  - Strongly Agree

11. In the face of inadequate current water supply Town should...
  - Allow development but require development to pay for additional water rights
  
12. What is the most important next step for Town in regards to water or wastewater?
  - Our most important next step is to clear up our disagreement with Salida over wastewater services. Then build a trusting relationship with them that allows for each of us to keep our own identities and the ability to make our own decisions without the other impeding the direction we each would like to move our town/city.
  
13. Producing housing that is accessible to our local workforce requires public subsidy in amounts that directly affect affordability levels.
  - Strongly Disagree
  
14. Density is directly linked to affordability (i.e. increased density lowers the cost of each housing unit).
  - Somewhat Agree
  
15. Encouraging housing development, including market rate housing, is helpful to the overall health of the housing market and to the community.
  - Somewhat Agree
  
16. Housing policy is a local government responsibility.
  - Somewhat Agree
  
17. What specific policy would you change or advocate for that would have a tangible impact on workforce housing if elected?
  - Allow for increased density if a project includes permanent long term rental units.
  
18. New rules & regulations for environmental sustainability should be weighed against, and modified for, their impact on the health of local businesses.
  - Strongly Agree
  
19. Environmental sustainability is inextricably linked with innovation and technology.
  - Strongly Agree

20. The single most important action [BV/Poncha] can take in 2024 to advance environmental sustainability is...

- Enact incentives to bring business in that produce goods that are shipped out for dollars brought in. Take the focus off of tourism so that our prosperity isn't dependent upon increasing the number of cars driving to our area, increased stress on our water and wastewater infrastructure, ever increasing negative impacts of our natural surroundings, and lower wage jobs that cannot keep up with the rising cost of living.

21. "Closing question: What question have we not asked that you'd like to share (and answer?)"

- No Response