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**RE: Tom McCracken | Chaffee County Commissioner 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).

- When I first came to the valley in '72, we floated from Granite to Royal Gorge. In the 80s, I worked at Frontier. I was finally able to realize my dream 5 years ago when we moved up into the timber of district #2.

My ability to work well with those whose agendas conflict with ours has been honed by my careers in real estate, classroom teacher, building principal, and retired BV High School Math Teacher. I build consensus by collaborating with all involved to achieve a win-win situation, so far as is possible.

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 Agree

3. Development approval times are:

- Slow, but necessarily so

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?

- The "Country" is the primary attraction that drew so many of us

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to this valley. For instance, a few available activities such as hiking, biking, climbing, off-roading, and skiing pull visitors from all over the world. Typically, tourists come and go, but enough come and stay. That's why we promote the town atmosphere. We do not aspire to be a big city but we cherish our remote setting with our friendly and accepting towns. Chaffee County exemplifies the "country country and town town" mantra.

5. The County government is sufficiently connected to, and communicative with, local school districts and higher ed institutions.
  - Somewhat Agree
  
6. How can County government encourage/support/facilitate increasing work-based learning programs for local youth?
  - Stimulating training programs such as Internships, fellowships, shadowing and apprenticeships all provide opportunities for our youth to stay here to develop careers and practical trades and skills. Not every student seeks the formal college degree path or the military route. The county could invite and welcome these introductions to the fields through cooperation and collaboration with our districts. Various departments may benefit from the potential and energy in this next generation of productive citizens.
  
7. I have read the latest strategic plan of the Chaffee County Early Childhood Council.
  - Yes
  
8. County government should take tangible action to support the creation and maintenance of childcare slots.
  - Somewhat Agree
  
9. What should the County government do starting in 2025 to support

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childcare?

- Formal educational training and experience in school settings verifies the justification for deep and effective learning. Money invested in our youth continues to pay out dividends long into their future and the communities where they travel after their formal schooling. From Pre-K up to the formal secondary or even post graduate certifications ALL benefit the recipient and the community. From increased tax revenues and productivities, to decreased incarceration levels and law enforcement involvement, education is our best tool to improve our collective futures.

10. Passing a County ordinance requiring the installation of broadband infrastructure as a part of all new development is a must.

- Somewhat Agree

11. Internet infrastructure should be treated as equally important to other utilities (water, sewer, gas, electricity) in infrastructure projects.

- Somewhat Agree

12. What is the local government's role in increasing broadband availability and reliability for the community?

- Dovetailing from the prior discussion about education, and the ubiquitous nature of technology in all aspects of our lives, access is vital. Laptops, handhelds, and televisions are only a few of the online devices most of us use daily. Additionally, security, and large household appliances also benefit from the access to broadband. Finally, good wifi will support keeping the town the town.

13. Chaffee County has enough water to meet municipal, housing, and commercial development growth.

- Somewhat Agree

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14. In the face of inadequate current water supply Town should...
- I'm not sure about the Town, but the County should use the governing documents such as the land use and comp plan to manage growth and seek additional water access.
15. What is the most important next step for the County Government in regards to water or wastewater?
- Water and wastewater are top priorities for development in the West. However, we can not just grow until we run into a problem. Some estimates claim we have water available for 26,000 residents. Our current population of 20,000 has some room for growth. It would be foolish to act like everything is ok but must operate under a warning status knowing water is our governing factor for growth in our valley. As a commissioner, I must manage this growth through our tools, such as the land use code and the comp plan.
16. Producing housing that is accessible to our local workforce requires public subsidy in amounts that directly affect affordability levels.
- Somewhat Agree
17. Density is directly linked to affordability (i.e. increased density lowers the cost of each housing unit).
- Somewhat Agree
18. Encouraging more housing development, including market rate housing, is helpful to overall housing affordability and thus to the community.
- Strongly Agree
19. Housing policy is a County government responsibility.
- Strongly Agree

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20. What specific policy would you change or advocate for that would have a tangible impact on workforce housing if elected?

- A career in real estate revealed the subtle effects of supply and demand, public involvement and private financing on the housing market. The county has entities in place that have requested support to pursue solving the workforce housing concern. They should have the opportunity to reach these goals. Private developers should also have opportunities to satisfy this need. I will describe a few things that will facilitate this growth. One, the fewer restrictions, the better it is for private development. Two, cooperation and not competition between private and public projects is vital. Three, as an educator, I am reminded of the need for data to guide our decisions. With that in mind, we need a usable metric to measure the effectiveness of any of these quests for workforce housing.

21. New rules & regulations to advance environmental sustainability should be considered in the context of their impact on the health of local employers.

- Somewhat Agree

22. Environmental sustainability is inextricably linked with innovation and technology.

- Somewhat Agree

23. The single most important action the County government can take in 2024 to advance environmental sustainability is...

- Our primary focus should be centered on communication, transparency and publishing measurable rubrics to define our effectiveness in the county offices. These metrics should be articulated by the various departments in the offices and

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published for the resident's benefit and understanding. This should happen under the umbrella of the comp plan, the land use code and the Policy Pillars.

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

- How are you equipped for success in this role?

Years in the classroom have taught me how to collaborate with classrooms full of students and their needs. I have found the best leadership involves all those who will be affected by the outcomes. Effective communication with these stakeholders requires listening and understanding of needs and wants of all the participants.

My nearly decade long experience in school administration equipped me with confidence and willingness to gather opinions of parents, students, teachers and staff. This unique background facilitates the isolation, identification, follow through and solutions to address any issue.

Finally, my career in real estate reinforced the ideals of processes and procedures that are necessary for anything to change. Nothing happens automatically. Nothing happens in a vacuum. Forward progress requires cooperation among teams and is the only way for success.

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