

**FORT COLLINS BUSINESS COMMUNITY
CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE
2016 COUNTY COMMISSIONER ELECTION**

**Questionnaires are due back to ahutchison@fcchamber.org
by 5pm on Friday, September 9, 2016.**

**Please note that all questionnaire answers
will be shared with the business community.**

Office Sought: Larimer County Commish	District (If Applicable): 3
Name: Karen Stockley	
Home Address: 316 Bothun Rd., Berthoud, Colorado 80513	
Daytime Phone: cell 720-933-4679	Evening Phone: home 970-532-7031
Fax: N/A	Email: karenstockley@att.net
Employment: Self Employed, owner Front Range Antiques	
Length of Residence: In County: 17 years, 50 years in Colo In District: 17 years	

Please limit responses to approximately 200 words per section.

- (1) Education: I graduated from Northglenn High School in 1980. Attended Western State college 1980-1981. Attended Platte Business college 1985-1986.

- (2) Past and Present Community Service Including Offices Held: Volunteered at elementary schools for 20 years. Berthoud Planning and Zoning Member, worked on two Berthoud Master Plans/Land Use Plans. Berthoud Museum docent/fundraiser 2005-2007. Thompson Board of Education Treasurer 2008-2012, worked with lobbyist in Denver on School Finance Act.

- (3) Past and Present Employment/Business Experience: Worked in various law firms (insurance defense) up to 1994, then stayed home to raise my children for 14 years. Own Karen's Fine Antiques 2001-present. Owner Front Range Antiques 2006 to present.

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- (4) Current Employment and Responsibilities: Currently run my antique mall Front Range Antiques. I have 5 employees and 40 antique dealers that rent spaces from me. I do payroll, sales tax, purchase antiques and supplies for my business, and every other facet any business owner would deal with on a daily basis. My responsibility is large, we have an 11,000 square foot business that I have run successfully for over a decade. I have many satisfied customers and have grown my business in the 10 years from an almost vacant mall to a full mall with many excellent antiques dealers. We are one of the premiere antique stores in Colorado with repeat customers coming from all over the country.
- (5) Specific Qualifications For This Office: I believe I am very qualified to be the next County Commissioner for Larimer County. I am very familiar with large million dollar budgets from my tenure on the Thompson Board of Education. Budget management was my specialty on the Board. I have a lot of experience with land use from my time on Berthoud's Planning and Zoning and efforts on Berthoud's Land Use Plans. I understand development, fees, infrastructure, bonding, mil levys and everything associated with growth and the effects of growth on businesses and communities. My business experience is something my opponent does not understand – what it takes to make payroll and grow a business. I believe the most effective government entities run their governments as a successful business. I love learning and solving problems. I work very well with people and always find common ground with my associates.
- (6) Why are you running for this office? There are so many reasons why I want to be a Larimer County Commissioner. I think first and foremost is that I absolutely love northern Colorado, it has been my home for many years and I want to ensure that it stays a great place for my children and grandchildren to live. I believe we are a very diverse county, yet every commissioner is of one singular partisan group. There are many issues that I believe have not been adequately addressed in the 8 years my opponent has served as a commissioner. I have a strong background in many of the issues commissioners deal with on a daily basis. I am a great problem solver, and enjoy the challenge of finding cost effective, logical solutions to problems that block progress and growth for the county. I understand the need to plan for our growth for the next ten, twenty and

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fifty years in northern Colorado. It is incumbent upon any representative of the people to listen to all of the people of Larimer County, not just those who have similar political values. I believe I have the desire, work ethic and backbone to be an honest commissioner who will work for the people, all of the people of Larimer County.

- (7) What have you done to prepare for election to this office and how you will you conduct yourself if elected to this office? What experiences have you had that makes you qualified to serve in office? I learned a lot about legal language and laws in my years working in law firms. My minor in college was history, and I still love history and how it often can repeat itself if we are not careful. My volunteer work has given me a vast knowledge; understanding planning and zoning, land use plans, education, lobbyists and state funding sources etc. Five years ago I took Larimer 101 to learn more about county government because I was interested in how the county works. I attended Berthoud Board meetings for many years to understand how city budgets and development really works, from a concept on a piece of paper to the final, built out project with the ribbon cutting. As a consumer I pay attention to retail trends and how they relate to the businesses we have in Larimer County. I love a challenge, and I love the thought of making positive change for Larimer County.
- (8) If you are elected, what are the top three accomplishments you want to have completed by the end of your term and how will you get them done? There are so many areas that need attention. (1) One of the biggest issues in Larimer County is the lack of affordable housing. This affects employers in many ways; the ability to hire employees who live close enough to their job to have a reasonable commute, the lack of homes to purchase for young families that are less than 30% of their monthly income, the difficulty for our elderly populations when they downsize, and the long-term employee loyalty to employers when the cost of living is too high to live in Larimer County. I have some ideas for affordable housing that can hopefully improve the long-term opportunities for homebuyers and renters. (2) We

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must also address the homeless and transient populations that are harming both the businesses and homeowners in old town Ft. Collins and downtown Loveland. I believe we can look to Utah as a leader in reducing their homeless populations. By building inexpensive apartments for the homeless, once they have home security, we can better address the root causes of homeless, whether it is job insecurity, mental health issues or addictions, we can better address their needs, and in the long run cost taxpayers around 2/3 less of the cost of policing the homeless. (3) I think traffic congestion is becoming a huge problem in most of Larimer County. We need to find funding solutions that work, working within the scope of what few federal dollars are currently available. In addition to expanding I-25, I believe we need to increase funding for the Flex busses, and look toward other means of transportation that will reduce the single occupancy vehicle trips we see in northern Colorado.

- (9) What do you think are the top 3 economic priorities the county government should undertake during the next four years? What role should Larimer County have in economic development? How will you make the economy a County budget priority? This is a tricky question in that the role of Larimer County is not specifically to push for any economic growth. That being said, a good economy is vital to any healthy community and to the overall health of Larimer County. I think when we look to employers considering relocating to the county or to any cities within the county, it is important that an employer brings us “primary” job; those jobs that pay a livable wage and can bring good tax revenue and improve the quality of life in our county. I think we also need to take care of and foster the current businesses we have in Larimer County. Are we doing everything we can to help them thrive? What are our taxes like, development codes, overall health of the business community, and what areas need improvement? Taking care of what we have is critical to maintain the tax base and quality of life for residents already living here. And third, do we have a good plan in place for new businesses looking to move into our county – do we have studies and revenue projections and areas in the county that we know need such a business, and has the growth and potential compatible development in the pipeline that will compliment such growth? Does the business make sense in this location? Is the community friendly to this business? And per our workforce center, are there employees skilled to work the jobs that these businesses would bring?

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- (10) How will you make Larimer County a more Jobs Friendly community? Are you willing to engage with business leaders to discuss these solutions? Please explain how you will stay in touch with business leaders. Absolutely I would love to work with business leaders. I want my door to the business community to always remain open, and I am willing to listen to ideas and/or complaints about what we are doing now, and where the business community would like to be in 5 years, 10 years etc. I would love to have regular meetings with the Chamber of Commerce and any other businesses that feel the County Commissioners can assist them in making their business a success.
- (11) What role should Larimer County have in the region? What do you believe are the top issues facing Northern Colorado in the next several years? I think the commissioners should and really do already have a large role in Northern Colorado. The commissioners have advisory positions on a myriad of boards and commissions, including transportation planning and many other critical areas that will continue to have a major role in how our county develops. I believe some of the large issues affecting our county in the future include how to deal with rapid growth and immigration into Colorado, and how to balance that growth with an already declining public infrastructure, including failing and overcrowded roads and bridges, including I-25. We will have to find a balance between this rapid growth, and perhaps inadvertently allowing it to ruin the very places we most love. Along with transportation and infrastructure issues, I see issues with air pollution rising and ozone levels becoming hazardous and needing to be addressed as a matter of health and well-being for our citizens. And finally,

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with a rising jail population, I see the need for an expansion of our jail over the next 10 years or so – once we have found better ways to deal with our mentally ill and drug addicted inmates.

- (12) Colorado will continue to grow, including our area. How should Larimer County plan for growth, if at all? First and foremost growth must be “smart.” That sounds like it is easy, but good growth is often like an onion, from the inside out. When you grow like an onion, all of the critical services are much easier and cheaper to provide. Every community needs a solid, workable Master Plan for their community, as well as a transportation plan. Then each of the communities need solid, friendly IGAs with each other, so we can work together harmoniously. Issues like the best location for big box retail versus which community is the first to “win” the big box must be minimized, and cooperative agreements between communities are a must to allow for the best growth to occur in the most logical place in the county. We must also plan for open spaces and other natural areas, as we know that is a big asset to many of the new citizens relocating to Larimer County.
- (13) What are the top two issues facing county government over the next 4 years and why do you believe they are the most important? I believe the top 2 issues would be working towards a short and long-term plan for keeping down the cost of housing for those that live in northern Colorado. If we do not fix it, we will continue to lose talented young people to other communities where housing is more affordable. We also have two departments that do not have sustainable budgets in the county, and we must fix these departments. I truly believe the issue of homeless and transient populations has become a crisis for many of the business in Ft. Collins and Loveland, the longer we wait to address this situation, the worse it will become. I already hear from people that they do not want to go downtown anymore because they are not “comfortable” with these populations. We need to do substantial work on both of these issues or we will see businesses leaving our downtowns and finding retail locations outside of the hearts of our community.

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- (14) What economic tools should the County add to their "tool box" of resources to attract key employers? I would be interested into hearing what key employers want from the county. I know quality of life is important, although most places will tell you we have a great quality of life here in Colorado. Schools and transportation and location to a major airport seem to be most important to an employer. There are times when employers want "incentives" to relocate a business to a community. There have been instances where these incentives have been successful, and times when they have not. I believe we must be very careful with incentives. Simply handing out incentives without guarantees and assurances that the company will bring in enough revenue to make the incentives positive for the county or community can end up costing millions of dollars. I believe all angles must be carefully studied before using this "tool" that many front range communities routinely use.
- (15) What are the top three transportation improvements Larimer County should accomplish? What is your position on the Fix North I-25 effort? Why? I support expanding I-25 with the additional lanes north and southbound to the Mead exits. However, we cannot continue to widen I-25 forever, and we have to look at other goals, short and long-term, to meet our transportation needs. I believe to alleviate congestion we need to expand bus services to the adjacent communities and to Denver. And finally, I believe we need to begin, again, the conversation around what it would look like and what it would cost long-term to build rail from Ft. Collins to Denver. Every advanced city in the world has some sort of rail, and if we continue for fifty years to do nothing, our traffic mess will be an absolute nightmare compared to what it already is.
- (16) The Larimer County Landfill is nearing the end of its viable life. What

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should we be doing to prepare for our waste stream future? Larimer County has already found a site south of Rawhide for a new landfill. The biggest issue with this, I believe, is the length of distance between the landfill and people located in the southern part of the county. An hour plus commute for not only local trash haulers, but also residents, seems too far. We can extend the landfill for a little while past the decade mark by promoting larger recycling programs in Larimer County, something I believe most residents will embrace if given the opportunity. This is a complex issue and I believe at some point looking at other locations should also be placed back on the table.

- (17) An effort to create universal health care is on the state ballot this year (Amendment 69). What is your position on the issue and why? I understand this is a worrisome ballot issue for many businesses, including my own. However, we as individuals and families cannot continue to absorb the rising costs of health care. In my family (my husband, four kids on our insurance) we paid over \$35,000 out of pocket in 2016! We were extremely fortunate to be able to come up with the money for two of our daughters' health issues, but many people cannot afford to do what we could fortunately do for our family. As it is, we are just now beginning to struggle with our insurance company to recoup some of our out-of-pocket costs. For my family, I believe Amendment 69 will be an improvement over what we have endured the past year. I do completely understand the fear for businesses and for business owners who will be taxed on their profits, but I believe in my heart our health care system is broken and out of control, and until we take the PROFIT out of healthcare, we will continue to bankrupt good people who cannot afford the premiums and co-pays we currently have for health insurance.
- (18) Why would a business person support your election to office? As a business owner myself, I know well the trials and stresses and hard work it takes to be a business owner. Two years after I purchased my business, the economy crashed. I worked many, many hours and had to cut expenses and hours to keep my store open. Only a small business owner can understand and appreciate that perspective. I am an honest, hard-working person who would

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make an excellent County Commissioner if I am fortunate enough to get elected in November.

- (19) If business groups endorse you, is there any significant information that could come out about you during a campaign that could potentially embarrass you (and them) publicly? (ex: bankruptcy, arrest, conviction, etc.) I do not believe I have any “skeletons” in my closet to worry about.

Karen Stockley
Signature

September 9, 2016
Date