

**Questionnaires are due back to ahutchison@fcchamber.org by 10 a.m. on Thursday, January 24, 2019**

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

Office Sought: Councilmember	District (If Applicable): 1
Name: Joe Somodi	
Home Address: 3239 Green Lake Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80524	
Daytime Phone: 212-246-3874	Evening Phone: 212-246-3874
Fax:	Email: foco4joe@gmail.com
Employment: 20/20 Yoga	
Length of Residence: In City: 4 years In District: 2 years	

***Please limit responses to approximately 200 words per section.***

**1. Education:**

Binghamton University, Liberal Arts Major (Concentration in Cinema), Minor in Sociology, Graduated with honors. 1997

**2. Past and Present Community Service Including Offices Held:**

Board of Directors, The Family Center/La Familia & Chair of Marketing and Development Committee: leading the rebranding of the entire organization (3/18 to present)

Founder and Producer, FoCo Speaks Out!: building a community of transformative inclusion; produced two sold out events. (2017 to present)

Chair of Steering Committee for Spark!: a social organization for gay professional men to network and connect in Northern Colorado; implementing core systems to build a long-term stronger network (8/17 to present)

Workgroup Committee Member, Imagine Zero – A suicide prevention workgroup; leader of the visioning and organization of public engagement (9/18 – present)

Human Relations Commission & Chair of Media/Community Recognition Committee; reorganized awards process and new design of award and led the creation of FoCo Speaks Out! (1/17-12/17)

### 3. Past and Present Employment/Business Experience:

Small business owner since 1999.

Current owner of 20/20 Yoga, as a health educator (2007 – present)

Past owner of Gryffen Productions (1999-2015), a small boutique video company that helped Fortune 500, major non-profits, small businesses and individuals with customized branding and marketing products. This was a 360 degree-service experience - from client analysis to strategic development planning to budgeting for outcomes and finally production and post-production work. I served in the primary role as executive producer on all 100+ projects.

### 4. Current Employment and Responsibilities:

Owner and Operator of 20/20 Yoga:

- Manage
  - Manage a robust roster of private clients all across the country
  - Manage budgets, website design and upkeep
- Market
  - Market and Host small businesses seminars, lunch & learns
  - Blog contributor to many health websites
- Grow
  - Design & lead customized workshops, trainings & retreats for greater understanding of the body/mind & practical applications in daily life
  - Guest lecturer at educational institutions
  - Create & teach online learning programs

### 5. Specific Qualifications For This Office:

I have 20 years of small business experience in both large and small size metro areas. I understand, on a daily basis, the needs and challenges of business ownership. 20 years of business experience also means 20 years of consistent leadership. I wake up every day ready to listen to others, help solve problems where I can with a deep desire to learn and grow.

As a health educator, I will incorporate care of our community in much the same way that I care for my hundreds of students. Being articulate about both facts and figures and the ability to understand how to connect with people and community are critical attributes that I bring to the table.

I've been fortunate to serve in a wide variety of leadership roles in Fort Collins. Being on commissions, boards and committees has taught me the skills of creating effective partnerships, strategic planning and budgeting for outcomes. I have collaborated with diverse groups and gained deep understanding of their views and challenges.

FoCo Speaks Out!, the event that I created and produced, is a reflection of my commitment to community. I have an excellent working relationship with the current city council members and city staff, local business owners, participated in City Works 101 and City Planning process, and have local government knowledge, highlighted by my leadership position on the Human Relations Commission.

## 6. Why are you running for this office?

It's the people of our community who motivate me to want to serve. I have connected with those who are experiencing homelessness, who are seeking affordable childcare or housing, or who are working to overcome mental health issues. Accurate representation means knowing the challenges in our community both intellectually and, for me, on a deeper, more personal level.

I am running because, as a health educator, I want to continue to co-create an even healthier Fort Collins. Health has been my unique lens on life for the past dozen years. Health for an individual and our community means stability and sustainability for the long-term. I will make health a top priority as it relates to these three pillars: quality of life, growth and equity and inclusion.

Finally, I represent a growing group of eager new citizens who have made Fort Collins their Choice City. This was a deliberate 8-year search for my spouse and I to find the right community to work and retire. This lens is unique and vital to being on the council. The new voice I'd bring to the table will be more reflective of our growing community of new community members, which will strengthen the council so it more accurately meets the needs of our city.

## 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?

These are some of the ways I have prepared for this election:

- Review of city plans, budget for 2019-2020, charter and codes
- Regular review and participation at City Council meetings
- One-on-one meetings with all current City Council leadership, city staff and local business leaders to know exactly what it takes to do an effective job
- Conducting listening sessions with community groups and citizens to understand their needs and concerns
- Building an online presence and email database to be more accessible to a wider audience

As a City Council member I will be visible, accessible, reliable, and accountable. How I will conduct myself is embedded in the values I hold dear.

- Authenticity: I will lead with honesty while always maintaining an open mind
- Balance: Well-rounded health (both myself and community) which leads to stability, sustainability, and smart growth
- Curiosity: To be informed, to ask good questions and discover multiple paths and solutions
- Optimism: My energy creates a conscious space of joy
- Responsibility: To be a dedicated advocate for our community and to honor inclusivity for all voices

I'm qualified for public service because I have a wide lens on issues, I know what it is like to be at the decision-making table every day, I am able to handle challenges that require knowledge, robust networks and effective relationships with people to have successful outcomes.

**8. If you are elected, what are the top three accomplishments you want to have completed by the end of your term, how will you pay for them and how will you get them done?**

Our city government can only be as effective as the people who are actively involved and invested. So, I want to improve communications between city staff/council and the community at large. Making certain that more diverse and fresh voices are heard and discussed is paramount, as well as a deeper commitment to follow-through. More unique outreach strategies need to be employed that will allow more diverse voices to the table.

Improve our economy health by:

- providing more diverse affordable housing opportunities
- attracting and retaining new business growth
- finding good paying jobs for the underemployed
- growing a world-class arts community

These can be accomplished by working in partnership with the county, local stakeholders and our Chambers of Commerce and implementation of the Talent 2.0 study recommendations.

**9. What do you think are the top 3 economic priorities the city government should undertake during the next four years? What role should Fort Collins have in economic development? How will you make the economy a City budget priority?**

Employers who might be interested in siting their businesses here are not encouraged to do so, owing to a lack of affordable housing. When we create housing opportunities, we become more attractive to companies as a possible community to site their business.

Collaboration is needed with the county's Economic Development Department and our Chamber of Commerce to strengthen opportunities for local entrepreneurs to be successful. Key to this is to effortlessness around granting permits and streamline processes online so that businesses feel like customers.

A healthy workforce is about attraction and retention and should be one of top priorities in the next four years. For example, as a board member for The Family Center, I am keenly aware of the lack of quality, affordable child care. This becomes a deterrent for the us to retain the workforce. In addition, the low paying jobs for the needed workforce in the child care industry also creates serious retention issues. To be successful, we can use the strength of our community partners to identify and recruit businesses that fit the culture of Fort Collins and will offer more family wage jobs.

**10. How will you make Fort Collins 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.**

Becoming a more jobs friendly community is about understanding the needs of businesses, clearing the path and promoting business growth. As a small business owner, I understand the challenges of working with municipal services. By learning first-hand what our businesses are coping with and allowing businesses to expand more easily, we will create a community where most any business can thrive.

I can't image being on City Council and not having a strong relationship with local business leaders. I'd want to engage business leadership in regular panel discussions, world café style discussions and quarterly deep-dives that produce a more profound awareness of the issues but also creates actionable items that can be achievable and create noticeable change in our community.

**11. What role should Fort Collins have in the region? What do you believe are the top issues facing Northern Colorado in the next several years?**

Fort Collins is a leader in the region and this must be maintained. Equally vital is sharing our knowledge with other communities, so we encourage collaboration, not competition. Our regional leadership will shape the development of other communities when it comes to issues like transportation, environment and diversifying our economy.

An estimated 40-60,000 people commute to and from Fort Collins each day, which puts a lot of stress on our roads. The road improvements and widening of I-25 are critical to making our community more livable as our population grows. Taking care of our environment can be a thriving part of the economy but not at the expense of adding extra burdens on business with more regulations. Creating incentives and rebates to save money will encourage businesses to make adjustments which will help the health of our environment.

**12. Colorado will continue to grow, including our area. How should Fort Collins plan for growth, if at all?**

Business is a vital part of our growth and this is something that needs to be fostered. I want to sit down with the North, Mid and South Fort Collins Business Associations and visit the business owners so I discover their pressing needs. I will make the best decisions when I understand the stakeholders. We need to seek all ways we can support businesses in a deliberate way, in the same way the city supports the citizens of our community.

**13. Tell us about your participation in the City Plan process.**

I participated in the City Plan process by attending the public forums and workshops, reading and responding to the online forums, speaking to our leaderships about my personal views and concerns, and reviewing the online summary documents.

**14. What are the top two issues facing city government over the next 4 years and why do you believe they are the most important?**

- Growth: how do we create an infrastructure that can support the population increase? Key to this is how broadband is implemented so it's effective for both home owners and businesses.
- Workforce Attraction and Retention: Too many people are needing to live outside of Fort Collins since their jobs don't allow them to afford housing. This is certainly prevalent with our minority population, yet they are the backbone of our workforce. This situation puts a strain on our transportation system, affects graduation rates and college aspirations.

**15. What economic tools should the City add to their "tool box" of resources to attract, retain and expand key employers?**

To attract and retain businesses, focus should be paid to systems and processes to access resources from the city. For example, we can implement a one stop online shop, so a business can quickly get permits, find information about taxes, and understanding current regulations. This will help make Fort Collins a place where businesses want to grow. In addition, the city could add an economic liaison, that would work directly with the county, chambers and our other economic partners to effectively communicate the value of doing business in our community.

**16. What is your position on the Fix North I-25 effort? Why?**

The improvements are necessary and vital to the prosperity of our community. Wider roads will help us with the shared labor force and commuting. Other outside businesses will see we have a connected community because our labor shed is being shared, which in turn, will free up the supply chain currently being deterred by interstate blockages. In short, the long-range work will be inconvenient but necessary to the continued growth of Fort Collins and the region. I'm committed to working in lockstep with all the stakeholders so that the changes benefit Fort Collins in the best possible way.

17. Why would a business person support your election to office?

I've owned two small businesses over the past 20 years, and my livelihood has depended on the success of this daily responsibility. I've walked in these shoes long enough to understand the language, the needs and overarching challenges of maintaining a successful small business.

18. 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.)

No.

Signature



Date

1 - 24 - 19