



# GRAND JUNCTION AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## 2015 VOTER GUIDE

*This guide is designed to present voters with a business perspective on a number of upcoming ballot measures and provides a brief introduction to the candidates for this year's Grand Junction City Council election. Each candidate was asked to complete a questionnaire related to issues important to the business community, and their responses are provided in this pamphlet.*

### CITY OF GRAND JUNCTION REFERRED MEASURE 2A

RESTORING AUTHORITY TO THE CITY TO PROVIDE EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY WITH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS HIGH-SPEED INTERNET AND CABLE TELEVISION SERVICE SHALL THE CITY OF GRAND JUNCTION, WITHOUT INCREASING TAXES BY THIS MEASURE, BE AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY WITH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNER(S), HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICES (ADVANCED SERVICE), TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES AND/OR CABLE TELEVISION SERVICES AS DEFINED BY §§29-27-101 TO 304 OF THE COLORADO REVISED STATUTES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ANY NEW AND IMPROVED HIGH BANDWIDTH SERVICE(S) BASED ON FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES, TO RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, NONPROFIT ENTITIES AND OTHER USERS OF SUCH SERVICES, WITHOUT LIMITING ITS HOME RULE AUTHORITY?

#### **CHAMBER POSITION: YES**

*The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce has officially **endorsed** Referred Measure 2A and urges voters to **approve** the measure.*

### CITY OF GRAND JUNCTION REFERRED MEASURE 2B

AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO INCUR ADDITIONAL DEBT FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS (WESTSIDE BELTWAY) AND TO KEEP AMOUNTS IN EXCESS OF AMOUNTS WHICH THE CITY IS PERMITTED TO SPEND UNDER TABOR IN ORDER TO PAY DEBT SERVICE AND FINANCING AND CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF WESTSIDE BELTWAY PROJECTS WITHOUT ANY INCREASE OF

ANY EXISTING TAX RATE AND WITHOUT IMPOSING ANY NEW TAXES SHALL CITY OF GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO (CITY) DEBT BE INCREASED \$14,500,000 WITH A REPAYMENT COST OF \$16,500,000 TO PROVIDE FINANCING FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING FOR ALL OR ANY PORTION OF THE COSTS OF THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS KNOWN AND REFERRED TO AS THE WESTSIDE BELTWAY WHICH INCLUDES 25 ROAD FROM I-70 B/HIGHWAY 6&50 TO F 1/2 ROAD, F 1/2 ROAD TO 24 ROAD AND 24 ROAD FROM PATTERSON ROAD TO THE INTERCHANGE AT I-70; SHALL SUCH DEBT BE PAYABLE FROM SUCH CITY REVENUES AS THE CITY COUNCIL MAY DETERMINE AND BE ISSUED WITH SUCH TERMS AS THE CITY COUNCIL DETERMINES TO BE NECESSARY AND IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CITY; AND SHALL THE CITY, WITHOUT ANY INCREASE OF ANY EXISTING TAX RATE AND WITHOUT IMPOSING ANY NEW TAXES, BE AUTHORIZED TO CONTINUE TO RETAIN ALL REVENUES IN EXCESS OF AMOUNTS WHICH THE CITY IS PERMITTED TO SPEND UNDER ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION (TABOR), INCLUDING THE CURRENT RIVERSIDE PARKWAY DEBT RETIREMENT FUND, FOR 2015 AND SUBSEQUENT YEARS UNTIL 2024, FOR THE PAYMENT OF ALL CITY DEBT ISSUED FOR RIVERSIDE PARKWAY AND THE WESTSIDE BELTWAY UNTIL ALL DEBT IS PAID IN FULL, WITH ALL AMOUNTS RETAINED TO BE USED FOR PAYMENT OF THE COSTS OF THE FINANCING, DEBT, INTEREST AND COSTS OF ISSUANCE AND CONSTRUCTION INCURRED FOR THESE PROJECTS?

#### **CHAMBER POSITION: YES**

*The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce has officially **endorsed** Referred Measure 2B with the caveat that the Chamber expects the City to continue to allocate funding into improving other corridors of commerce including North Avenue, Horizon Drive and 29 Road. The Chamber urges voters to **approve** the measure.*

## 2015 Candidates

### Grand Junction City Council

#### At Large 4-Year Candidates

Chris Kennedy

Dennis Simpson

#### At Large 2-Year Candidates

Rick Taggart

Kim Kerk

#### District B Candidate

Barbara Traylor Smith

#### District C Candidate

Bennett Boeschstein

#### District E Candidate

Duncan McArthur

*Each candidate was asked to answer a series of questions pertaining to their qualifications for the positions. Candidate responses have been listed in this Voter Guide. The four questions the Chamber presented each candidate are as follows:*

1. Please give us a brief background statement including what makes you qualified to be a City Councilman and your previous community involvement.
2. As a City Councilman please name what your top two policy issues are and explain why they are relevant to business.
3. Do you consider the City of Grand Junction business friendly? Why or why not?
4. If elected, what do you hope to have accomplished four years from now?



## DISTRICT B

### BARBARA TRAYLOR SMITH



*1. Please give us a brief background statement including what makes you qualified to be a City Councilman and your previous community involvement.*

It's not just my experience as a current council member where I have been active in the development of the Economic Development Plan, budgeting and selection of infrastructure projects.

I also have a background as a CPA and retirement planner which have proved valuable in the analysis and decision making skills necessary to determine how I will vote on issues. I do have a financial background but we always say, "it's not about the money, it's about your life!" The financial background is a critical consideration but the most important thing is about how decisions impact your life. How they impact the people in your life. Lastly, I've always been involved as a school volunteer at my childrens' schools and teach adult education classes at the Western Colorado Community College and I am a strong believer in the City looking for ways to support educational institutions because in the long run a strong education system will help both economic development and quality of life throughout the Grand Valley.

*2. As a City Councilman please name what your top two policy issues are and explain why they are relevant to business.*

My top two concerns are Economic Development and preparing our infrastructure for the future. Both of these are critical for Grand Junction's future.

No matter what the question is, "jobs" is often the answer. Many of the city's budget constraints are solved by expanding the pie, bringing new residents and creating new jobs in the region. I think that we need to continue to investigate how we can use a foreign trade zone to bring new jobs to the region. With respect to preparing for the future, I supported taking the Riverside Parkway project to the voters who, when they've got the facts, will almost certainly continue to support that project. The City should be congratulated because through proper management of that project, we're actually going to be able to make that investment go a lot further than we originally planned. It makes a lot more sense to use the money already raised to keep investing in roads so that we can manage the transportation needs of the future. We don't want to be a mini-Denver, congested behind a long line of cars. Our quality of life is our most important asset and we want to invest now to make certain we don't lose it.

**3. Do you consider the City of Grand Junction business friendly? Why or why not?**

The current City Council has taken great strides to ensure that our operations are considered business friendly. We have worked with Zoning and Planning to review procedures and policies to look for efficiencies and redundancy. For example we have:

- a) approved a grant for the North Ave businesses for façade improvements
- b) extended timeline for planned developments that were delayed due to the economy
- c) approved zoning changes to allow more flexibility in use and design

Our kids shouldn't have to leave town to have a career when they graduate. The City needs to work cooperatively with our educational institutions, the Chamber of Commerce, citizens groups and our current delegation to continue to be a place where business owners want to locate, workers want to live, and telecommuters want to move. We may have an opportunity to develop a high tech med-tech corridor and it will take all of us working together to make it happen, but we can do it.

**4. If elected, what do you hope to have accomplished four years from now?**

In four years I hope to see an economic engine running on all four cylinders and the appropriate infrastructure being built to position us for the future. Grand Junction has so many things to offer with our small town feel but large city opportunities that I hope we are able to retain both of those qualities!

*The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce officially endorses Barbara Traylor Smith's candidacy for City Council.*



## DISTRICT C

### **BENNETT BOESCHENSTEIN**

Candidate did not provide photo or responses.

## DISTRICT E

### **DUNCAN MCARTHUR**



**1. Please give us a brief background statement including what makes you qualified to be a City Councilman and your previous community involvement.**

I have served on the council since July 2013. Prior to city council, I worked in land development for a national homebuilder securing land use approvals on projects across the nation. This experience gave

me an exposure to the land use policies and procedures in dozens of municipalities. Having experienced how the system works in so many locations gives me an insight on how to improve the development code and planning processes. My land development construction background gives me an understanding of the many capital improvement and infrastructure maintenance projects that come before council for approval.

My community involvement has included sitting on a number of committees for the City of Grand Junction and Mesa County working on housing studies and land code reviews.

I am also active in my church volunteering for a variety of service projects from working in the kitchen at Catholic Outreach, the Emergency Shelter Program and various food drives.

**2. As a City Councilman please name what your top two policy issues are and explain why they are relevant to business.**

While I have served on council, two issues related to business has been the drainage infrastructure issues and the land use development code. Drainage in the valley needs to be addressed to allow the City and County to serve new projects as well as existing neighborhoods and businesses. By making the land use code more user friendly makes doing business in the City more attractive to new and existing businesses when they are considering developing new business location or expansion of an existing business. I want to see the SB 05-252 Override approved on the ballot in April to allow the City to go forward with exploration of broadband in the city.

**3. Do you consider the City of Grand Junction business friendly? Why or why not?**

When I moved to Grand Junction in 2004, the land use approval process was more difficult to use than with projects I had developed in places like California. The building/development community was actually considering a lawsuit against the City

over its land use process. Since that time, the City has made substantial strides in improving the process and the current staff members of staff have a totally different attitude to business than was previous the case. Now staff is taking the initiative in improving the process.

**4. If elected, what do you hope to have accomplished four years from now?**

If elected, my term would only be for the next two years. In that time, I desire to see a solution to the drainage issues establishing a way to serve the valley for many years to come. I would also like to see the Homeless and Vagrancy Committee find a means to alleviate the chronic homeless situation to some extent utilizing public and private partnerships. In addition, I would hope to find a means to prioritize the capital road projects such as Horizon Dr., North Avenue and 29 Road Interchange including a potential source of funding. Also advancing the economic development program that has been initiated including the Foreign Trade Zone potential, the valley wide marketing branding and developing a broadband program to assist new and existing businesses make use of this tool.

*The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce officially endorses Duncan McArthur's candidacy for City Council.*

## AT LARGE 4-YEAR

### **CHRIS KENNEDY**

Candidate did not provide photo or responses.

### **DENNIS SIMPSON**



**1. Please give us a brief background statement including what makes you qualified to be a City Councilman and your previous community involvement.**

I am a Certified Public Accountant with varied financial experience in both the public and private sector. I have lived in Grand Junction for 21 years and own my own business. For the last 10 years I have paid close attention to activity within the City and County governments. I have attended numerous meetings and have occasionally provided input from the citizen's standpoint (the Sentinel has dubbed me a "watchdog"). I believe my strength is that I am an analytical thinker and a critical thinker. I keep an

open mind on issues and listen to both sides before forming my own opinions.

**2. As a City Councilman please name what your top two policy issues are and explain why they are relevant to business.**

My first priority is to assist in attempts to jump start the local economy using market based solutions. There are already many people devoting time to this activity and I applaud their efforts. I believe the City has taken the correct first steps by adopting an economic development plan and engaging a consultant to help the community agree on concrete steps for the near future.

The second policy issue for me is to improve transparency and accountability. I am an advocate of the Colorado Open Meeting Law and am convinced that better decisions will be made if the City Council goes out of its way to inform the public and to seek the citizens' views.

**3. Do you consider the City of Grand Junction business friendly? Why or why not?**

If I had been asked this question two year ago, I would have said "No". The April 2013 election caused a marked change in the attitude of the City government. Chamber opponents predicted dire results because candidates supported by the Chamber were elected. While there have been no controversial issues addressed in the last two years, the current Council has correctly exhibited its willingness to support business. If I am elected, I will do all I can to maintain and improve this business friendly attitude.

**4. If elected, what do you hope to have accomplished four years from now?**

More than anything, I hope to have cooperated with other Council members, other governmental bodies, and the citizens of our valley to improve the health of our economy. By implementing innovative strategies, we can make our community a place where both existing and new businesses can thrive. As businesses succeed, jobs are created and the entire community benefits.

I also hope that improved transparency and fiscal accountability will result in a more robust analysis of problems that come up along the way.



## AT LARGE 2-YEAR

### RICK TAGGART



**1. Please give us a brief background statement including what makes you qualified to be a City Councilman and your previous community involvement.**

I first moved to Grand Junction in the early 80's. I had the opportunity to lead and manage Marmot Mountain Works, a young and dynamic outdoor company as its CEO, Chairman and Co-Owner.

As an avid outdoorsman I immediately fell in love with the area and have made it my home for over 30 years. There have been times when my business career has taken me away from the Grand Valley, but my wife Deanna and our children have always considered this our home.

I have given considerable thought to running for public office in the past, but my business endeavors have precluded this goal. I have, however, been civic minded, having served on several boards within the community including the Grand Junction Economic Partnership, the Business Incubator, the Saint Mary's Foundation Board and the Suicide Prevention Coalition. I am now in a place that I can give more time and energy to the community that I so love.

My business experience, coupled with my civic commitment, make me uniquely qualified for this role. I have lead some great companies, teams and brands from Marmot to Timberland to my many years as CEO of Swiss Army. I have been an entrepreneur and experienced the joys of growing my dreams, but I have also been a part of the heart break when the dream does not succeed.

As a business owner and leader I understand how critical limited resources are and accordingly how to plan, organize, monitor and lead an organization to maximize the return on these assets. I also understand how important collaboration is, engaging in critical strategic partnerships with individuals and organizations to create a unified effort. We are at a critical time in this valley; our economy has suffered for a considerable length of time. I believe I bring a focus to this dilemma and I am committed to giving my energies and knowhow to helping this economy grow to benefit the citizens of this wonderful valley.

**2. As a City Councilman please name what your top two policy issues are and explain why they are relevant to business.**

The most critical policy issues are Economic Development and the Prioritization of Infrastructure/Capital Improvement.

Economic development is critical to existing businesses and entrepreneurial ventures because it provides quality jobs for our existing workforce, it provides opportunities for our graduating students and it attracts new people to the valley. Ultimately it grows consumer and business spending thus benefiting all businesses.

Quality infrastructure/Capital Improvement, whether it is broadband capability, roads and transportation or city services or amenities is a key component of the foundation for the community and our businesses. It enables businesses to do business efficiently, thus reducing costs and improving customer service. Capital resources are scarce, however, so the infrastructure projects have to be prioritized just as a business would do, built around the financial principle of which alternatives create the greatest long term benefits for the community and its businesses.

**3. Do you consider the City of Grand Junction business friendly? Why or why not?**

Business Friendly: I have seen our City government go through cycles on this subject. When our economy was growing so rapidly after the turn of the century, City government was a deterrent to growth, with significant restrictions and substantial time delays for both business expansion and new development. The City was not business friendly during this era and missed an opportunity to lead the community in economic diversification efforts. 20/20 hindsight is always easy, but true leadership during this time would have helped the businesses and citizens of this valley and would have cushioned the downturn.

Today the atmosphere is more business friendly, but the City has been somewhat slow to react to the need for economic development. I applaud the most recent City Council and Staff for their efforts to create a comprehensive economic development plan, but this should always be a critical strategy for the City, not just in downtimes.

**4. If elected, what do you hope to have accomplished four years from now?**

Accomplish in 4 years: I want to help lead the City as a councilman to evaluate the economic plan that is in development, to benchmark this plan against like communities that are implementing effective strategies with the end goal of identifying the most promising approaches for economic growth. I then want to play a key role in rallying all the strategic partners in the community to begin the implementation of the agreed upon plan with a sense of urgency.

From an infrastructure perspective I want to make certain we identify all of the projects that our citizens and businesses deem worthy of review for the long term development of the community and then go about prioritizing these projects with a very simple criteria of the greatest return while living within our budget. Similar to the economic plan I want to see the approved infrastructure improvements move into the implementation phase.

I want to earn the trust of the business community, engaging with them and listening and responding to their needs. While budgets will not allow City government to do everything, effective communication is vital so that there is a mutual understanding of what we need to do to be successful and grow this economy.

*The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce officially endorses Rick Taggart's candidacy for City Council.*

## AT LARGE 2-YEAR (CONTINUED)

### KIM KERK



***1. Please give us a brief background statement including what makes you qualified to be a City Councilman and your previous community involvement.***

I moved to Grand Junction in 1977 with my parents and 3 younger siblings. I have 4 children, all raised in the Grand Valley, as are 6 of my 7 grandchildren. Currently, my family are residents of Grand Junction, except for 1 son, who lives on the East Slope, after recently completing a 6 year tour of duty with the Air Force.

#### Personal Community Involvement:

- A Foster Parent Program in Mesa County

Fortunately, we were blessed and able to adopt 2 of the foster children that were in need of a home.

- Small Sign Business Owner & Operator -15 years.

As a small, local company we were happy to donate many signs along the way to organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and a variety of schools in District 51.

- Junction Indoor Tennis Club, Manager- 5 years.

During the 5 years managing the tennis club I organized, advertised, managed, and maintained a program providing 1 month of free tennis lessons to all elementary and middle school age children in the Valley. The local tennis community banded together and donated racquets to the program, while tennis playing college students donated their time as instructors. Not only did this provide the opportunity for many children to experience tennis and healthy exercise, approximately 990 children participated in the free program.

- Blue Star Construction, 9 years to date as Planning & Development Manager, (literally in the trenches).

I am considered the “Worker Bee” for Blue Star Construction. I have managed the development of 14 new subdivisions equating to about 1,000 building lots in the Valley.

My position includes the following skill set: Land Acquisition & Due Diligence, Planning & Development, Bids & Budgeting Millions of Dollars, Infrastructure, Drainage, and Stormwater Mgmt. Over 80 % of the subdivision development process is accomplished by working with internal operations directly at the City of Grand Junction.

I am qualified to be a City Councilman...

I have served on numerous boards and committees such as, Mesa County Land Development Code Focus Group, Grand Valley Drainage District Board, Mesa County Building Dept., and as an advisor to other developers, to name a few. I have been included in many informal round table discussions in regards to future planning and infrastructure needs as it relates to our Community.

I have worked with City of GJ Planning Department extensively, as well as Mesa County Planning Department, Mesa County Commissioners, and City of Fruita Planning Department. Currently, I have engaged in conversation with new City Manager of Fruita. Additionally, I have been approached by City of Palisade’s new planning director to take a look at their code. I am confident I can continue in that role as an ambassador for the City as well as the entire valley.

*With those experiences I bring a good common sense approach to the table.*

*“I, Kim Kerk, will show up, informed and be involved.”*

***2. As a City Councilman please name what your top two policy issues are and explain why they are relevant to business.***

Safety is one of my top priority policy issues.

When a person travels to Grand Junction to shop at the plaza where Sportsmen’s Warehouse is located, and tries to exit across 25 Rd., or tries to cross Horizon Dr., or cross 24 Rd. from Holiday Inn, to shop and eat, they will have experienced the same frightening trip as the residents of Grand Junction do routinely. I don’t believe I would return to Grand Junction again for my shopping trip as it takes way too long and is unsafe to travel these routes. Sales have been harmed because people have been discouraged by the hassle to return to those businesses. When sales are down, sales tax revenue is down as well. In addition, I have contacted Chief Camper with GJPD, who has agreed to get together next week to discuss what other safety issues are on the radar.

The Planning & Development Process is a policy issue to me as well. I believe that Planning & Development Department in the City of GJ has made many improvements over the past few years, BUT, there is still a lot of room to streamline the submittal and review process. One of the constant complaints I hear from my peers is the length of time it takes to take a subdivision through the entire process. Consider the amount of interest paid on \$3,000,000.00 sitting idle for a year and a half waiting to start infrastructure.

***3. Do you consider the City of Grand Junction business friendly? Why or why not?***

I consider Grand Junction to be a business friendly City. I believe the City Staff maintains an open door policy and are very willing to work towards finding solutions instead of turning people away.

## **KIM KERK (CONTINUED)**

The number of organizations involved in business growth and development in our community is outstanding! Together these organizations are always looking forward for new ways to encourage existing business and attract new ones.

The City Mission Statement says it very well:

*The Mission of the City of Grand Junction is to be the most livable community west of the Rockies by 2025. The Core Values of the City of Grand Junction are Integrity, Respect, and Bridge Building.*

### **4. If elected, what do you hope to have accomplished four years from now?**

The seat that I have chosen to run for is a 2 year seat; but still allows time for some new goals and accomplishments.

1. Cross walks are a simple way to provide a much safer environment for the traffic in those highly traveled areas I mentioned above. Cross walks installed on 12<sup>th</sup> St. near CMU have made a significant change to the traffic flow, and proved they work.
2. If SB-152 does get the override, I believe the City Staff & City Council can make some major strides in obtaining information and options in regards to Fiber Optic Broadband, resulting in improved service, speed, and reliability. Additionally, I would like to introduce the thought of reviewing new broadband installation in the City as an infrastructure improvement, similar to gas and electric installation.



## **WHO WILL YOU VOTE FOR?**

Join the Chamber as we host the

### **Quarterly Membership Luncheon featuring 2015 City Council Candidate Forum**

**Monday, March 16, 2015**

**12:00 Noon**

**DoubleTree by Hilton Grand Junction, 743 Horizon Drive**

All candidates have been invited to attend, introduce their respective platforms, and answer your questions.

For more information about this event and to register, please contact the Chamber at 242-3214 or register online at [www.gjchamber.org](http://www.gjchamber.org). Reservations are required.

**Thank you to Quarterly Luncheon Sponsor:**

