ELECTION

Fountain Hills candidates take part in Q&A: Part four
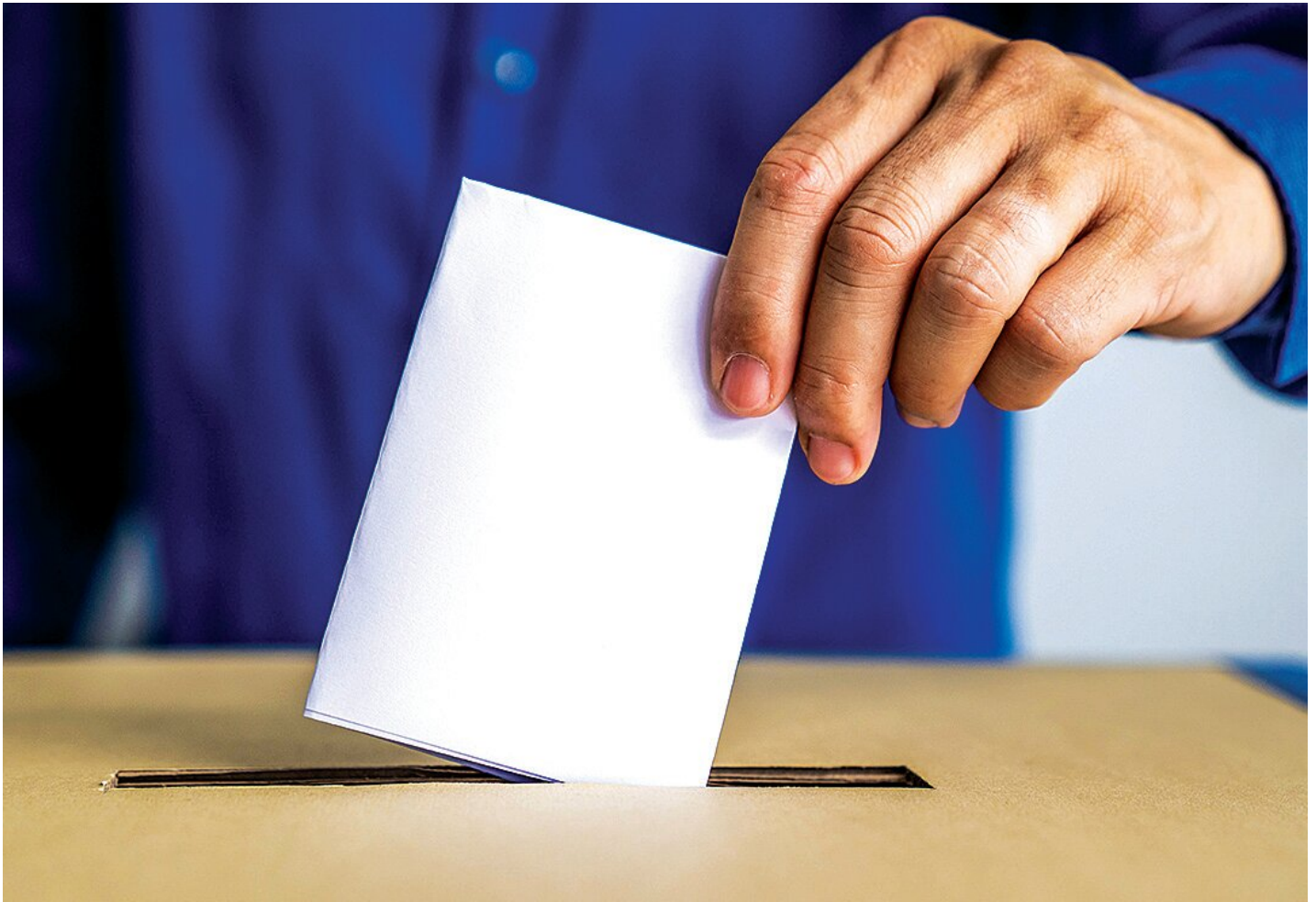
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(METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION)

Posted Wednesday, June 19, 2024 8:00 am

The field has been set for the 2024 Fountain Hills Town Council race, with three candidates vying for the office of mayor and eight seeking one of three seats available on the council. All candidates were invited to take part in the Fountain Hills Times Independent's four-part Q&A series, with responses to the fourth question printed here.

Candidates for town council include Clayton Corey, Matthew Corrigan, Gayle Earle, Henry Male, Peggy McMahon, Art Tolis, Robert Wallace and Rick Watts. Candidates for mayor include Joe Arpaio, Ginny Dickey and Gerry Friedel.

As a reminder, July 19 is the last day to request an early ballot and July 23 is the final day to mail back early ballots. July 26 is the final day to vote early in person with July 30 being Election Day, with polls scheduled to close at 7 p.m.

Voters may visit BeBallotReady.vote (http://beballotready.vote/) to verify their registration statis and to make sure their personal information is accurate.

Question: How will you bridge the political divides and make sure all constituencies are heard and provided for?

Ginny Dickey (mayor)

Our community has experienced cycles of division, but this feels different… like a crossroads.

Perhaps colored through a nostalgic lens, previous controversies seemed more like family squabbles. Sure, there were disagreements, but the goals were consistent with moving forward for the good of the whole.

We hear about "disruptors" but without good faith efforts to work together for shared, positive outcomes, blowing things up for the sake of creating chaos is not brave or commendable.

We must be balanced, from the dais to the day-to-day. It's important to respect differing opinions and listen well. Anyone who claims all politics is partisan hasn't been in a room of mayors.

No platforms, arm-twisting or frantic texts should determine how leaders vote. There is common ground, compromise and humor when people let their guard down and talk.

To that point, social media is not a friend to good governance. Misinformation takes us in directions that feed division. We consumers of data must be curious and discerning, especially with our new "source" AI.

Clear understanding of what elected leaders seek to accomplish is best addressed through official means. To that end, the town created a Strategic Communications Plan, a non-partisan approach most people value.

Gayle Earle (council)

I met close to 600 constituents during the time I personally gathered signatures to secure a spot on the ballot for Town Council. Almost everyone I asked to sign my petition wanted to know my political affiliation; I answered honestly. Integrity and transparency are a core value of mine which I will bring to the council if I am honored to be elected.

I am committed to treating everyone with respect that I work with on the council as I do in my business and personal life regardless of one's political views. I believe all of us personally and in the town government want the same things: to feel safe, be heard, respected, know our town is in good hands and running efficiently.

As a council member I will engage in respectful dialogue and listen to all sides of an issue before making any decision. In preparation to serve on the Town Council I have been asking hundreds of constituents and many business owners what is important to them and how can our town better serve them. I will continue this as a member of the council.

Gerry Friedel (mayor)

Listening. The political divide can be bridged by having leadership that listens to all, follows the rules and is respectful to all. We have a lot to be proud of in our community, and this has been accomplished by representatives from all political parties. We need to remember at the end of the day, we all want a kind, positive, friendly, healthy and well-run town. We have several projects like our newly renovated Community Center, Museum campus and our new International Dark Sky Discovery Center which I believe everyone is behind. These are "togetherness" projects, which define our community, which I believe bring all of us together.

We have a very giving and helpful community. Literally thousands of volunteers. Look at Make a Difference Day. We all work side by side helping neighbors and friends. Focusing on these positive activities and less on the negativity that seems to thrive on social media would go a long way to bridging the divide.

I believe good leaders are out in the community talking to businesses and residents and listening to their needs, something I do on a regular basis. I also believe we have more in common than differences.

Henry Male (council)

As an independent, my perspective is formed by listening to all sides and viewpoints. During my campaign for this non-partisan town leadership position, I have reached out and shared ideas with all types of civic, social and political groups. I will continue to make inroads with citizens of Fountain Hills. I listen to anyone who takes the time to share a civil conversation and offer constructive solutions. Open, thoughtful, respectful collaboration is always the best solution for virtually any problem. I promise to represent the whole town, as much as feasibly possible.

Peggy McMahon (council)

   The reality is that we live in a divisive and partisan society that reflects our national values, not our town community values. While bridging political divides can be challenging, it is critical for fostering understanding and representing our community as a whole.

Many residents across the political spectrum have communicated to me their displeasure with the politics in town and are dismayed because the current partisanship doesn't reflect our community values. They feel it is dismantling our strong sense of community.

Open discussions that focus on solutions that foster shared goals and resolutions play an important role in bridging political divisions because they promote inclusivity and a more collaborative community effort.

I represent our community as a whole based on open communications with all residents. I encourage all constituents to provide their input by attending council meetings, making public comments, writing emails, attending town events and/or contacting me to discuss their concerns. I rely on this community input to consider all points of view before making informed decisions based on what is best for the entire town as one community.

Art Tolis (council)

To bridge political divides and ensure all constituents are heard and provided for, I will continue my commitment to working collaboratively with each member of the council, staff and departments within our town. My record demonstrates that I am not a partisan political figure; I strive to understand everyone's viewpoints and discuss issues openly and objectively. We must operate as a non-partisan council.

Recently, our community has seen too much division, with some candidates running on tickets that suggest a unified agenda. This approach undermines independent thinking. We need cooperation and collaboration, valuing the unique perspectives everyone brings to our discussions. I look forward to working with whomever is elected, focusing on supporting initiatives that ensure the long-term financial stability of our community. My goal is to foster an environment where all voices are respected and considered, promoting unity and effective governance. By maintaining an open, inclusive approach, we can address the needs of all residents and move forward together for the betterment of Fountain Hills.

Robert Wallace (council)

Bridging political divides in Fountain Hills requires inclusive and transparent governance. Establishing open communication channels is crucial, as it allows residents to voice their concerns and opinions, fostering a sense of involvement and trust.

Regular town hall meetings, online forums, and surveys can provide platforms for community input and feedback. Forming community advisory boards comprising diverse members can ensure that different perspectives are considered in decision-making processes.

Focusing on common goals, such as public safety, quality education, and economic development, can help unite residents around shared interests and objectives. Committing to transparent decision-making means providing clear explanations for policy choices and being open about the factors influencing decisions. This transparency can build trust and reduce misunderstandings. Promoting respectful dialogue is essential for maintaining a positive community atmosphere. Encouraging residents to engage in civil discussions, even when they disagree, can help foster mutual respect and understanding.

By implementing these measures, we can create a cohesive community where all voices are heard and valued, and where political differences are addressed constructively.

Rick Watts (council)

Objective listening, listening with the intent to understand another person's position and how it coalesces with the town residents. Just as feelings are not facts, opinions aren't either. Either simply reflects how an individual views a given issue based on their knowledge and supporting data. Accepting another's opinion and permitting that person to express their opinion, acknowledging that some or all of their position could be valid, helps defuse volatile discussions by listening with the intent to learn and understand rather than to refute a position, aka, argue.

Curious how objective listening can and does result in mutual respect. I intend to practice what I preach and attempt to infuse a similar perspective in other council members. Regardless of how a discussion evolves, my final position on any issue will be based on civil conversation supported by data. My hope and beliefs are that my objectivity will receive the same respect as I intend to offer anyone who engages me with the intent to have a civil, intellectual and data driven conversation with the goal of achieving a common ground that satisfies both of the contributors.

Joe Arpaio (mayor)

Partisan policies may cause strife and dissension in our community. My two opponents are both running on a slate. We have the "Democrat" slate Team Dickey (McMahon, Corey, and Male) and "Republican" slate Team Friedel (Earle, Watts, and Corrigan). I'm appalled at the vitriol both sides have already launched. It does not benefit the town, so I refuse to play the slate game. I have always in all my campaigns not accepted endorsements, but always go to the people who I serve since they're my bosses. The town does not have a police department but selects outside agencies to perform law enforcement duties. The Fountain Hills mayor/council has selected me and continuously hired me and my sheriff's office for 24 years (as I was the longest serving sheriff in Maricopa County history). I have received numerous awards, some in the Congressional Record, while in charge of law enforcement offices in the U.S.A. and in foreign

countries for cooperative efforts. I mention this since I will make every effort to bring the mayor position and council back together again. I appreciate the opportunity to express my brief comments in this four part series.

Clayton Corey (council)

Bridging political divides and ensuring all constituencies are heard and provided for is essential for effective governance. To achieve this, I plan to establish regular, open forums and town hall meetings where residents can voice their concerns and suggestions. Ensuring these meetings are accessible and widely publicized will help reach a diverse audience. Maintaining transparency in decision-making processes builds trust and ensures all community members feel informed and included. This involves sharing detailed information about town projects, finances, and policies through multiple channels, including online platforms and community bulletins. Involving representatives from various community groups in policy development processes can ensure multiple perspectives are considered. This can include forming advisory committees with members from different backgrounds and experiences.

Emphasizing shared goals such as improving public safety, enhancing quality of life, and promoting economic development can help unite different constituencies. Providing educational resources about town governance and encouraging civic participation can empower residents to engage more effectively. This includes workshops, informational campaigns, and partnerships with local organizations. Through these approaches, we can create a more inclusive and collaborative community where all voices are heard, and all needs are addressed. Together, we can build a stronger, more united Fountain Hills. #FountainHillsFuture ClaytonCorey.com.

Mathew Corrigan (council)

As a candidate for Town Council, I stand for traditional American values (faith, family and freedom), public safety, economic stability, fiscal accountability. If elected, I will keep my promises to these values. This will not please everyone, but no one can do that.

I promise to hear all sides of the issue, to fairly and to the best of my ability deliberate and decide on each issue at hand and keeping what is best for the people of Fountain Hills and my campaign promises. I find most division is not so much political, but idea and belief related. Each group, neighborhood or community may appeal to the Fountain Hills Town Council and be heard. Each group has the right to make their position "heard."

Now about the words, "provided for." Everyone in Fountain Hills will be "provided for," as fair and balanced deliberation of the issues and my decision will be based on this. I defend the U.S. Constitution and all First Amendment freedom of Religion, Speech, Press and Assembly and to petition the Government for redress of grievances.

Keywords

Town Council (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_filter=Town Council), candidates (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_filter= candidates), questions #4 (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_filter= questions #4)

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