



**SILICON VALLEY
PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY
FOUNDATION**

2022 Sheriff Candidate Questionnaire

Kevin Jensen

What makes you the best candidate for Sheriff and what is your personal experience with leading a large and diverse organization? Please list any major accomplishments. *

I have the most experience at all levels of this specific Sheriff's Office, especially running the Jails as Assistant Chief. I have the near unanimous trust of the people who will work alongside me (SCCPOA & 97% of DSA) to change the culture and improve the deficiencies that the public is now well aware of. I have earned county-wide respect, and all the major endorsements from Law Enforcement, Community leaders, and stakeholders, for publicly calling out the mismanagement for 12 years at Board of Supervisors meetings, during the Blue Ribbon Commission on the Jails, and in the media when appropriate - and I ran against the current Sheriff garnering 41% of the vote when she was at her peak of power to try to prevent the tragic events we have since witnessed. My greatest career accomplishments have been managing the Jails as a National model before they were transferred to the current Sheriff, and engendering trust and collaboration with all stakeholders to leave every division I've managed better than when I first arrived.

The current Sheriff's Office has many current problems, including the investigation into the issuance of CCW's exclusively for campaign contributions to Sheriff Laurie Smith. What do you believe are the biggest current problems within the Sheriff's Office, how will you fix them, and what will be your top three priorities if elected? *

Trust was broken with our communities and stakeholders over the last several years by our Sheriff. Morale, staffing and retention are at all-time lows and employee flight from our agency is at an all-time high. Our jails are unsafe for both staff and the incarcerated. With the trust I've earned from over three decades of ethical management, I will lead the change in our culture from the top by in depth internal scrutiny, investigation, facilitated interactive review and higher order values training, 360 degree evaluations process, and community involved bridge-building. I have received many comments that some employees will return, hold off on retirement, and prolong their careers if I become Sheriff. I will establish the philosophy of being ethically accountable, willing to collaborate as a local and regional partner to other organizations, and service oriented in the mission of protecting and respecting all whom we encounter.

1. Earning trust by modeling integrity and positively changing our culture and agency to better serve our communities
2. Partnering with our Board of Supervisors, Community, and other agencies to bring Mental Health solutions that will provide services to those in need to reduce incarceration, and appropriately care for those who are incarcerated.
3. Utilize the vast relationships and resources I have developed through 37 years of service to Non Profit, Law Enforcement and Service Organizations in local, State, and National Executive Leadership roles to bring Best Practices and solutions to the critical issues we face with Crime Prevention, Community relationships, Homelessness and Mental Health treatment.

There are currently 2 existing Consent Decrees, from prior lawsuits which the County has agreed to (Chavez v. County of Santa Clara and Cole v. County of Santa Clara). Has enough been done to address those issues and what will you do if elected to ensure compliance? *

Not enough has been done. Though the line staff tasked with addressing these Consent Decrees have worked hard, and made strides, the Sheriff has been distant from the process, and slow to resolve issues. I will model proactive ethical leadership and also be active in resolving and improving issues and conflicts as I have always done in the past.

As you are probably aware, the California Department of Justice has opened a Patterns and Practice investigation into our Sheriff's Office to investigate allegations relating to conditions of confinement in its jail facilities, resistance to lawful oversight, and other misconduct. How do you intend to implement any meaningful change at the Sheriff's Office while this investigation is occurring? *

As the only candidate to receive the overwhelming support of the Sheriff's Office employees and county worker unions, I have the trust of our team to finally offer true transparency and ownership of the issues to the D.O.J. and other entities in order to make meaningful change. I am fully aware of the current conditions because I frequently communicate with deputies still working under the conditions that are in question. By offering a leadership model that requires, encourages and facilitates ethical, legal and transparent practices - the changes already discussed in the consent decree remediations and with the monitors can be readily and positively enacted.

We understand that the Sheriff's Office is currently understaffed with numerous deputies transferring to other agencies or putting in for retirement. What is your plan to retain officers and grow the department, what qualities and characteristics do you look for in deputies, and how many deputies do you need for your department to operate at appropriate efficiency? *

I plan to model ethical leadership as I have always done, and I have received numerous communications from current and former staff that many will hold off retirement and some return to our agency should I be elected. I have always worked well with the Board and County Management, and I will do so again to partner in bringing our agency to its appropriate staffing in a fiscally responsible manner that provides safety for our community and Sheriff's Office employees. I look for personal integrity and ethics, respect for all people, self-control, maturity, courage, reasoning skills, and the ability to perform essential functions with excellence and commitment. Our staffing codes depend on what areas of responsibility we will retain when I take office. We need sufficient staffing to factor in reasonable relief codes to prevent overworking staff to the point of exhaustion, fatigue, loss of morale and the potential negative effects that are a result of improper staffing.

What is your stance on releasing convicted serious and violent criminals (undocumented) into the custody of Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE)? *

I believe that well-intentioned people often fail to contemplate unintended consequences. I will work to bring opposing viewpoints together to both preserve the trust, dialogue and assistance of the undocumented in our communities and protect all in our communities from "serious and violent criminals" regardless of their status. While we will not create fear by targeting those who are undocumented for their status alone, we will evaluate cases, and work with agencies of all kinds when that case requires further collaboration to protect our community from "serious and violent criminals".

There will be times when you will disagree with the Board of Supervisors policy directions. What will you do to maintain a strong working relationship with the Board when you disagree, especially if you feel their decision puts our county at risk? *

I have always worked well with previous Board of Supervisors, and have good relationships with some on the current Board. I believe that my longstanding practice of mutual respect and honest and frequent communication will allow me to both gain valuable insight from their knowledge base, and share valuable information with professional and reasonable manner that will assist the Board in following the best path forward.

What is your plan to build community trust with the two million residents of Santa Clara County? *

I will continue to be honest and transparent in calling for and establishing best practices that actually help us serve better, not simply look better. I will start with changing the culture of our agency from the top down, with a critical investigation, review and training process that allows us to fully understand and own our past issues before we improve them and transform into the trustworthy agency we and our community deserve. I plan on many meetings with all stakeholders to both listen and share as we form the legitimate partnerships necessary to be effective public servants.

Major violent crimes in San Jose and Silicon Valley have increased since the implementation of Propositions 47, 57, and AB109. As an elected official, would you use your position to advocate for changes to these laws, and if so what would you want changed? *

I will, and I have already had many discussions on the intent and unintended consequences of these laws. The public outcry is deafening to modify the legislation to prevent the kinds of rampant crimes that have caused heightened fear and closed businesses in our communities. In bi-partisan discussions I would start by proposing what some have already brought up - lowering the threshold back to \$400, allowing prosecutors to pursue charges across jurisdictional lines and add enhancements for significant losses - and charge a felony with two prior convictions.

A recent major decision with the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors involved either building a new jail or constructing a new mental health facility. If elected, what can you do to improve mental health care services while in jail and lower the recidivism rate? *

I was involved in the discussions and education of some electeds regarding this topic and decision due to my subject matter expertise as previous Assistant Chief of the Jails. I informed them that while we cannot incarcerate our way out of our issues, we needed the new jail for those in our care because it was designed with Mental Health professionals to address and provide an environment suited for treatment, rehabilitation, and re-entry. I advocated for the unified commitment to research and planning for concurrent front-line Mental Health services and facilities that would decrease the jail population of many who were severely afflicted and housed out of a dearth of options and mental health beds.

SVPAF believes programs like Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) have failed in SCC because they are exceedingly expensive and enable homelessness by precluding treatment of its underlying causes: mental illness and substance abuse. Do you believe our position is correct? As Sheriff, what would your role be in advocating for a better response to homelessness? *

I believe that while your position is partially correct, especially in regards to expense, it is a much more complex problem. We do not lack an abundance of care and concern, yet I believe we do not have a master plan that is supported by data and measurable results because people are all trying to present a variety of isolated options to improve their immediate electability rather than creating a bi-partisan coalition that can break through the political posturing and take a collective credit in providing a roadmap, funding, and implementation in conjunction with all stakeholders, including Law Enforcement. I am advocating for this coalition.

The city of SJ recently passed several gun control measures but critics have stated these laws unfairly target law abiding gun owners and do nothing to address violence in the city. If elected, how would you respond to these laws and what will you do to reduce major violent crimes in SCC? *

I am not convinced that the recent liability insurance requirement and fee will stand due to constitutional challenges, and they don't provide any solution to the huge problem of guns obtained illegally. Recent training I attended provided information that ghost guns are now easily obtainable and far more appealing to those who would perpetrate violence. To reduce violent crimes in SCC I will fully utilize the relationships I have developed with SCC Law Enforcement Chiefs and leaders -and local, State and National leaders and corporations over three decades to provide partnership solutions, best practices, and the latest technology in a regional collaboration - and as a Sheriff's Office regional facilitator.

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