



**SILICON VALLEY
PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY
FOUNDATION**

2022 Sheriff Candidate Questionnaire

Anh Colton

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 believe I'm the best candidate for Sheriff because

1. I am passionate about moral values,
2. Justice, and
3. Upholding our Constitutional principles.

These three pillars are the guide posts of what I believe ought to be the basis for wise decisions as County Sheriff who will take responsibility to be the keeper of the peace and the people's protector and upholding the Constitution. I have led large and diverse groups in my homeschooling community and in the health community. My major accomplishments were:

1. When I planned the end of the year picnic for the homeschooling group with a limited budget. Another major accomplishment was
 2. When I co-led the science and art fair in the homeschooling community.
 3. Lastly, I've had a few occasions when I've had to hold someone accountable to request they make good on what their responsibilities were.
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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? *

I believe the Sheriff's Office is currently faced with the following:

1. Confusion of Roles and Responsibilities: the true essence of what a sheriff is, is lost in recent times; the role of the sheriff is to protect the citizens and uphold the Constitutional rights without compromise and fulfill the oath which the sheriff is bound by.
2. Lack of transparency which goes hand in hand with, accountability, and
3. Trust within the Sheriff's Office; the term of sheriff office position should be limited to two terms; and the communication and building connections/relationships with the citizens in the community are limited.

As the Santa Clara County Sheriff, I would...

1. Define the role and responsibilities of the Sheriff clearly as it's spelled out in the Constitution.
 2. Realign the roles and responsibilities with the needs of our community to ensure we are within the constitutional framework, as well as learn about the Constitution.
 3. Lastly, I would find ways to connect and build relationships between the sheriff's office, all the citizens in our communities to ensure Trust and mutual growth and well-being of all.
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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? *

It is reassuring to know that Santa Clara County is committed to making sure those with mobility disabilities have equal access to programs, assistive devices, housing, bathing and dining facilities at the jail.

The Consent Decrees are the critical first step in ensuring compliance with the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act.

If elected as Sheriff, I would:

- 1.- Continue to prioritize construction efforts to minimize delays in the improvement effort.
 - 2.- Ensure that neutral experts how about committee of experts tasked with monitoring all the case and of the implementation of the Consent Decree.
 - 3.- Ensure that ADA training of custody and custody health staff is done annually.
 - 4.- Ensure that there is a solid process for ADA related grievance and request systems so as issues arise, they can be addressed timely.
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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? *

I intend to use wisdom and guidance based on the Constitutional principles to implement any meaningful change at the Sheriff's Office while the investigation is occurring.

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? *

My plan to retain officers and grow the department is to establish a positive work culture of honor, respect, appreciation, and integrity. I would also talk with the officers and ask for their input and concerns that they may have.

The qualities and characteristic traits that I look for in deputies are humility, truthfulness, heart for the job (a sense of purpose), valor, integrity, hard working, trustworthy, reliability, and honesty. The amount of deputies that are needed for the department to operate at appropriate efficiency depends on after reviewing and evaluating carefully on the cases and reports in each towns that need extra deputies.

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

ICE is responsible for enforcing federal laws, both criminal and civil, that encompass border control, customs, trade, and immigration. The Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) is one of the three operational directorates of ICE and it manages all aspects of the immigration enforcement process, including identification and arrest, domestic transportation, detention, bond management, and supervised release, including alternatives to detention.

Unless there is reasonable cause to not do so, the releasing of undocumented convicted serious and violent criminals fall under the jurisdiction of ICE and should be released into its custody.

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 would listen and have an open communication with the Board to maintain a strong working relationship with them. If I feel their decision puts our county at risk, I would remind them that the role of the Sheriff is to preserve the peace, protect the citizens and their constitutional rights, thus delivering justice, and upholding the constitution as the basis of our foundation in governance.

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

In order to have trust, you must first establish a relationship. From that relationship, trust can be earned and mutual respect can be gained.

My plan is for the Sheriff Office to work on developing a good relationship with the community through several avenues of exposure. This can be done both electronically and in person through community events, a monthly newsletter, and/or an ongoing "Meet Your Deputies/Sheriff program or other community-related safety programs. Connections to build relationships with other community groups, leaders, and the surrounding city local law enforcement are also critical.

Two million is a lot of residents but in order to have a mutually thriving community, both the Sheriff Office and the community must find a way to work together to create a thriving community we want. And that all begins with a desire to develop a relationship on both sides.

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? *

Propositions 47, 57, and AB109 were adopted to address the overcrowded California prison population issue. Their implementation, however, have unintended consequences and must be corrected to restore and maintain justice and safety. These unintended consequences are listed below but are not limited to the following:

Under Proposition 47, unless the defendant had prior convictions for murder, rape, certain sex offenses or certain gun crimes, certain crimes were reclassified as misdemeanors:

Certain drug possession offenses now require a misdemeanor instead of a felony sentence. For example, possessing a specified controlled substance such as GHB, a date rape drug, is now a misdemeanor.

Certain crimes involving shoplifting, grand theft, receiving stolen property, forgery, fraud and writing a bad check are considered a misdemeanor as long as it does not exceed the \$950 threshold. Law enforcement is reporting that thieves are calculating to steal just enough to be below the \$950 threshold to avoid a felony charge.

San Diego Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman provides an example that demonstrates the challenge, "It basically eliminates the automatic felony prosecution for stealing a gun. In the first six months of this year, in the city of San Diego we've had 115 guns that were stolen in burglaries. And I can tell you that people are not going to steal guns so they can add them to their gun collection. They steal them to commit crimes. ... Under Proposition 47, it would redefine grand theft in such a way that theft of a firearm could only be considered a felony if the value of the gun is greater than \$950. I can tell you that almost all handguns, which are the majority of the guns that are stolen, retail below \$950"

An unidentified source did an excellent job in describing the pitfalls of Prop 47, "When a career criminal steals a firearm, or a suspected sexual predator possesses date rape drugs, or a carjacker steals yet another vehicle, there needs to be an option besides a misdemeanor slap on the wrist."

Under Proposition 57, the goal is to cut down on the state's prison population by allowing nonviolent felons an earlier chance at parole. This proposition, however, is lacking in the definition of what is considered as a "nonviolent" offense. There is no California Penal Code section defining "nonviolent" offenses and it really needs to be defined. This is important as it determines WHO is eligible for release on parole.

Under AB 109, the responsibility for those convicted of less serious felonies in state prisons is diverted locally to county jails and probation officers. While AB 109 has enjoyed successes, the concern for ALL staff and community safety still remains and should be a high priority. Santa Clara County is known for decades to experience chronic short-staffing in many of its job classifications. There needs to be a more current reassessment of AB 109 with special focus on staffing to identify current needs in maintaining safety.

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? *

1.As a community we need to define what kind of moral judgment we want to guide us as our culture. I'm very passionate about this issue especially if we as a community want to raise our children and the future generations to honor and respect each other as well as other's property.

2.Justice, As your sheriff my role and responsibility is to keep the peace and enforce the laws that our community and citizens have in the books to govern them. I pledge to enforce these laws accordingly.

3.I would ensure to the Constitutional guidelines to best understand how to navigate some of this critical yet disturbing instances. That said, I would like to assure my fellow citizens and community that criminal, recidivism and all social disturbances will not be tolerated and will be weighed heavily to ensure mental health and criminal issues are address squarely and separately.

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? *

Santa Clara County has a supportive housing system that falls into five main categories listed below, and each of these programs contributes to the overall reduction in homelessness.

1. Emergency Shelter (ES)
2. Transitional Housing (TH)
3. Rapid Rehousing (RRH)
4. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
5. Homelessness Prevention (HP)

The Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSH) was uniquely designed to help people permanently avoid homelessness. It was reported to the SCC Board of Supervisors and the HLUET Committee on June 8, 2020 that 71% of the PSH program participants report some type of mental health disability, 45% report substance abuse, 40% report a chronic health condition, and 37% report a physical disability. This is actually the population for whom the PSH program is intended.

The PSH report indicates a high utilization of outpatient mental health services for the first 12 months after receiving supportive housing. This is considered positive as clients are encouraged to seek outpatient services and get stabilized. As expected, this utilization decreased significantly after 12 months post-housing. This success is most likely attributed to the Care Coordination Project that provides significant stability by coordinating, prioritizing and providing supportive services to help these individuals. As they are stably housed longer, it is shown that the utilization of outpatient mental health services decreased significantly. Over all, the PSH program is showing promising results as indicated in the June 2020 report. One of the Sheriff's responsibilities is to ensure everyone's safety. However, law enforcement does not have all the resources needed to ensure the homeless population and the community have the services they need at the time of contact. For example, there will be times when social services, emergency services and/or outreach coordinators will be more suited to provide the resources needed. The most effective way to maximize safety and efficiency is for the Sheriff's Office to be proactive and work collaboratively with other agencies within the community. Having a Sheriff Office that is proactive in getting to know the homeless community can also help identify potential problems before they arise. No one person or group can do this alone. When the Community and the Sheriff's office work together, they can accomplish any common goal!

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 recognize that in any given community these issues are inevitable, however; my role as the Santa Clara County Sheriff would be to consider these circumstances against the Constitution mandate. As for the issue of addressing the violence, I believe that should be left to the sheriff and the police department—and the citizens in our community need to know they have a responsibility in this upkeep. I would seek to hear from all the county residents and what they are willing to do to ensure their communities are safe.

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