

Incumbents AWOL

Incumbents Lucey, Jung, and Herman did not attend the county commissioner candidates' forum hosted by the Reno Gazette Journal. Candidates Wolgast and Johnson were not included since they do not have opponents in the primary. Candidates Kelvin Buchanan (CD-2), Brett Delaire (CD-2), Austin Grush (CD-3), Lindsay Judd (CD-5), and Greg Smith (CD-5) participated. Brett McCinnis (RGJ) was the M.C. and Anjeanette Daemon (RGJ) asked the questions.

Format:

- All candidates get 2 minutes for their opening statements.
- Anjeanette asks a question to each candidate in turn.
- Candidates get 1 minute to answer.
- Candidates get 1 minute for closing statements

Opening Statements:

Kel Buchanan (KB): He's qualified and wants to give something back to Washoe County

BD: Crack down on hiring undocumented immigrants. Change public workers' retirement to 401K. Control marijuana dispensaries.

AG: He will foster smart growth and bring a fresh perspective and new energy.

LJ: She's a millennial and a new mom. Washoe County must do better with the resources it has.

GS: He want's smart growth to limit traffic and flooding

Question "Why do you think you'll do this job better than your opponents?"

KB: He's managed budgets of tens of millions and worked on flood relief projects.

BD: He'll support Trump and the Republican agenda. Deport more undocumented immigrants.

AG: He hopes to revive the commission with his new energy.

LJ: She has volunteered with many groups and has a good perspective on what the community needs.

GS: He will bring effective leadership that is missing. He knows the state processes and has been on labor development and apprenticeship boards.

Question "Has Washoe County done enough for the Lemmon Valley Flood Victims"

BD: The county has done plenty. Homeowners need to assume responsibility.

AG: Washoe County has been making some progress. We need smart development, not rapid development.

LJ: No. Many residents bought insurance and then the insurers didn't pay. Need a moratorium on development there.

GS: No. We should buy out flooded residents so they can relocate.

KB: Agree with GS. Besides the 23 flooded homes, there are 4,000 commuters on Lemmon Valley Drive to worry about.

Question “What should be done in the closed basins”

AG: Insist on smart growth and accurate reports before new development.

LJ: We have a proposed flood plan for downtown areas. We need one for all of Washoe County.

GS: Quit building in a flood plain. It could be used for agriculture.

KB: Don't develop in a flood plain.

BD: Make homeowners buy flood insurance. Hold developers responsible.

Question “What do you think of the Washoe County Lands Bill”

LJ: It's a bad bill. It's mostly development and not much conservation. Public access to the BLM land should be maintained.

GS: He doesn't support the bill. We can negotiate parcels with the BLM as needed.

KB: ... he didn't make his point

BD: He supports any transfer of federal land to private owners. He doesn't want to give much to native Americans.

AG: Opposes the bill. Public lands should be accessible to the public.

Question “Should Washoe County be providing tax incentives for new businesses?”

GS: Such tax incentives aren't usually recouped. Tesla may be an exception since they have higher salaries.

KB: Storey County is wealthy from TRIC income, but Washoe County, Reno, and Sparks are bearing much of the burden.

BD: He opposes such tax breaks for the larger corporations. It shows corporate cronyism.

AG: He supported Tesla and has friends who work there. They have good wages, but the taxes Tesla avoids are paid by the residents.

LJ: San Diego gave big tax breaks and recouped it in the long run. We need the corporations to help educate and train new workers.

Question “What will be your criteria for judging new development projects?”

KB: Ascente had no plan for traffic and flooding. We need to stop doing such developments.

BD: We need a measured pace of growth and carefully evaluate water usage.

AG: We should see affordable housing within the McCarran loop. There should be more starter homes in new developments.

LJ: Community plans need to be adhered to.

GS: Annexation by Reno is a big problem. We need to revisit the regional plan.

Question “Washoe County has a critical problem of housing affordability. How would you address it?”

BD: Fight SJR14 on property taxes to lower housing and renting costs.

AG: We need to build more modest housing. Some of it should be high density infill close to transportation.

LJ: Seniors who rent are being priced out of their homes if they rent. Need higher wages and more starter homes.

GS: Build cheaper housing outside the Great Basin where property is cheaper. We need a regional solution since the problem originates with TRIC (Tesla, Switch).

KB: The solution is higher wages and lower taxes.

Question “What can Washoe County do about homelessness?”

AG: There have been good first steps with a new clinic. We need an increase in temporary shelter space. The tiny house project is promising.

LJ: Eddy House is an example of what we should be doing. The Land Trust promoted by ACTIONN is probably a good approach.

GS: Supports Eddy House and ACTIONN Land Trust initiative.

KB: Washoe County gets federal support for homelessness programs. Where is it going?

BD: Cut homelessness support to encourage homeless to leave. Perhaps give homeless funds to neighboring communities to entice homeless to leave the Great Basin.

Closing statements ... little other than “Vote for me”.

(from notes taken by Steve Wolgast)