

## Mayor Appointee Questionnaire

I would like to begin by saying thank you for the opportunity to submit answers to the questions purposed by council members. There is a tremendous amount of information that I could provide but in an effort to not to be too long, I've tried to provide shortened responses. Please don't hesitate to reach out for clarification or additional questions.

Serving as mayor for the past 8 years has been an honor and privilege. I've served, loved serving and will continue to serve our community in whatever capacity. When I raised by hand to stand in the gap for a season, it was with a care for our community in an unexpected, difficult season. When Mayor Hogaboam passed, it had only been 10 weeks and 2 days since I left office. Very little had changed in those 10 weeks. Mayor Hogaboam and I had been on the phone several times and for an hour the week before he passed. We had an excellent transition, which Chief of Staff Clay Long played a very important role. Clay Long has been, and is, an excellent leader and administrator. He has played a very important role in leading the city during the past almost three months of uncertainty. My hope is that the council will consider the importance of continuity as they make their decision to appoint the mayor. Continuity and experience within the mayor's office is important and will impact the long term success of Nampa.

Thank you for your willingness to serve our community, especially during this difficult time.

Please provide a typed response within this document to the following questions posed by Council Members. Please use a different font or color with your answer. Expand the document as needed.

1. Do you have any conflict(s) of interest that will direct your path as Mayor?

I do not have any conflicts of interest.

2. Share your opinion on the City of Nampa potentially transitioning from a Mayoral – managed form of government to a City Manager - managed form of government and the reasons for supporting or not supporting.

I support the City of Nampa forming a working group to explore the most effective governance model for our community. The recent election was a good indication of the challenge we face in electing a mayor. Mayor Rick Hogaboam had the experience to step into the job and thrive. Other candidates had no experience in managing an organization, lacked budgeting experience, employee management and general leadership experience. This is very concerning and is one reason I asked that the Chief of Staff position become an appointed position. A large city must have continuity between administrations. With a Strong Mayor form of governance, the Chief of Staff position helps ensure continuity. There is no guarantee the Chief of Staff will serve under a mayor that they are not supportive of. That said, the appointment of the Chief of Staff position helps protect the position regardless of who is elected as mayor.

The advantage of the City Manager governance is continuity. When an individual can be elected for political reasons but may have no relevant experience for the job, it puts the city at risk. A City Manager form of government is utilized less in Idaho and is highly utilized in other states. The Idaho State Statute only allows for the City Council to appoint the Mayor in the City Manager form of government. Other states elect the mayor, separate from council members. Personally, I would be more in favor of the City Manager form of government if the mayor were elected by the citizens.

I do believe we as a community should research the topic, hold meetings to discuss and let the citizens weigh-in.

3. a) Please share your opinion on running an override levy for police funding needs and a second one for infrastructure replacement (water, sewer, storm drain, intersection upgrades), and whether you would support a levy override and encourage the voters to pass them.

For police funding, the city may need to request a levy override. I would recommend we seek out public input before pursuing a levy.

At this time, I'm not supportive of a levy override for water, sewer, and storm drains. As mentioned below, we have not historically funded, via rates, what staff has previously recommended to address the aging infrastructure needs. This is a rate issue and at this time I don't believe we should pursue a levy override. That said, I would listen to the justification if a majority of council wanted to pursue it.

Regarding intersection upgrades, we just asked the citizens to approve a bond for transportation funding that would not have increased taxes. They did not approve it. We had a majority but not the needed super majority to pass. I believe transportation funding can be increased without a levy override. We need to continue to pursue an increase to registration fees and other sources of funds, not property taxes for transportation funding.

Rather than placing a tax burden on all citizens, I believe it's more appropriate for the enterprise fund associated with the cost burden to address the financial needs. An example is: an elderly citizen dealing with rising property taxes when they are driving little and not adding to the transportation burden. I would support a vehicle registration fee increase, as Ada County has in place, that ties the cost burden to the transportation use. This could only be implemented with the vote of the citizens. More could be said on this topic and additional discussions and research should take place.

- b) Please share your position on taking foregone (tax value not previously taken in previous years).

I'm supportive of using foregone to fund police for the FY27 budget. It's critical we fund public safety. Our city tagline is: "A safe and healthy community where people prosper". Public safety is vital to achieving this. While I don't have the current numbers, in prior years the lost property tax revenue, due to HB389, far exceeded the 1% foregone.

**4. Please explain the duties of Mayor and the time commitment required to complete these duties.**

If I were to list every duty, this response would be very long. I will provide a high level overview of the responsibilities. Even though the Idaho State Statute defines the role of the mayor, I have come to know the responsibilities are far greater than I could have imagined prior to being elected.

In a Strong Mayor form of local/municipal government, the Mayor is the CEO. For Nampa, it is a large organization of approximately 800 employees and a budget that can run over \$300 million. Beyond serving as the CEO of a large organization, the Mayor represents the City on various boards, Treasure Valley Partnership (Mayors across the Treasure Valley), and at numerous functions throughout our city, the Treasure Valley and the state. The mayor also represents the city at numerous local civic functions from non-profit dinners to ribbon cuttings and speaking at schools and other local events.

With the Strong Mayor form of government, the mayor has administrative oversight of the city employees. With the recent appointment of the Chief of Staff position, this allows for administrative oversight to be delegated to that position. The Mayor is still ultimately responsible, under the Strong Mayor form of government, for all employee/administrative oversight.

Budgeting and fiscal stewardship is a key role of the mayor. While the City Council votes on and holds responsibility for approval of the budget and ordinances, the mayor is responsible to both present the budget to council but also see that it is executed as budgeted. It is also critical that the Mayor understand the various funding sources of the city, and there are several.

Fiscal stewardship is critical and has been a focus over the last eight years of my administration. Stewardship is not just financial, it's how employees use their time and manage resources. Focus on stewardship must be ongoing and encouraged throughout the organization.

As it relates to ordinances, the mayor is responsible to ensure that the city enforces local ordinances. An example is Code Enforcement but also includes building code, animal codes, traffic code, and public safety, to name a few. And, not to forget our Alcohol Review Committee that provides oversight to the enforcement of our local alcohol code. Another aspect of ordinances, is providing to council names for appointments to various boards and commissions. This very important process is critical to good governance with representation from the citizens. While the mayor appoints, the city council confirms the appointment.

Another area of representation, where the Mayor needs to take an active role, is legislative advocacy. This is a critical area for local government as some of the greatest challenges we face are created and/or influenced by state legislative actions. House Bill 389 and the current Urban Renewal legislation are good examples of legislative challenges, not to mention the lack of transportation funding. I feel blessed that over the past 12 years I've built positive relationships with our elected officials across the city, county and state.

Emergency Management is another key responsibility of the mayor. When I came into office, the city did not have a unified emergency plan. Police and Fire had plans but we lacked a unified plan for all departments. While plans are now in place, it's critical the city continue to practice and keep our emergency preparedness plans up to date and ready to go. During COVID we established "Nampa Ready" and the framework is still in place, in the event it's needed.

Regarding time commitment, serving as mayor is 24/7, 365 days a year. There is not a time that a mayor is off duty. It doesn't matter what time of day or day of the week, the responsibilities of the mayor must be exercised. For the first several years in office, my average work day was 12 hrs at the office and then working from home on the weekend. Toward the end of my term, I attempted to manage work/life balance and moved to spending approximately 9-10 hours per day at the office, unless there was a council meeting that extended the day to 14-16 hours. From home, each day ended with another 1-2 hours of additional work. Sunday evenings were spent prepping for the week. This schedule is not really healthy and I hope with the new structure of the Chief of Staff taking on the day to day operations that the mayor can have a balanced work/life structure.

I would be remiss not to state what I have for the past eight years, that it's the office of the mayor that is critical to the role of the mayor. The staff that is in place in the mayor's office is to be commended for their work. I could not have done what I did without them. The mayor's office staff are critical to the work of the mayor and are greatly appreciated.

**5. Have you ever taken a public position on a controversial issue? If so, what was the issue and why did you choose to speak out?**

Every decision we make can be controversial to someone. Some are more controversial than others.

I can think of two controversial issues that I have taken a position on during my term as mayor. The first was transitioning the Nampa Fire Department to the Nampa Fire District. In seriously considering the present and future financial position in the city and watching the challenges in funding both the fire and police, I supported moving to a District to allow the Fire Department to access their own levy funds. This was controversial and required significant consideration, discussion with stake holder groups and time. Looking back, I still believe it was the right decision. It's likely we would not have Fire Station 6 today, with response times that are not appropriate. This could have cost lives. Our citizen safety should be a high priority.

The second controversial issue was the conveyance of the Ford Idaho Center to College of Western Idaho (CWI). As we are all aware, this was a dividing issue amongst council members. I believe even more today that the decision we made last fall was the correct decision for our tax payers. As leaders, it is our responsibility to look out for the next generation. CWI is a wonderful asset to our community, as it is the fastest growing community college in the State of Idaho. It is our responsibility to lay the groundwork for the next generation, giving them a hope and a future. As the largest community college in Idaho, CWI had the smallest footprint. Our community still has the benefits of the Ford Idaho Center, like the local graduations, the Snake River Stampede Rodeo, the Horse Park, and the positive economic impact that these events bring to Nampa. And now, with this partnership with CWI, we have intramural sports for our CWI students, enhancing their environment without the additional costs that the city could not afford. The local graduations are still taking place, along with the ability to host the funeral of Mayor Rick Hogaboam. The opportunity to expand the academic programs for future students is also exciting.

6. In your view, what realistic strategies can an interim mayor implement in the next 17 months to better align development approvals with infrastructure readiness, while working within budget restraints and state limitations on revenue growth?

When the term “interim” mayor is used, it could imply that whoever is chosen to serve as the mayor, their perceived role may be diminished. By the time a new mayor will be elected in 2027 and take office, it will have been almost 2 years. My hope is that the city can function in a normal capacity with a mayor in place.

Aligning development approvals with infrastructure readiness is both challenging and important. I believe it's very important that we identify the actual cost of growth and what the risks are of pausing growth. As I've heard from other mayors across the country, 'be thankful you are growing and not static or shrinking, because that is worse.' Something I wanted to get done but paused with a new mayor coming into office, was pulling together a working group of community members for their input on growth and how we respond to it. The working group would be asked to help identify what managed growth looks like, in light of our infrastructure readiness and limited revenue growth. I feel this working group needs to be convened as soon as possible to provide suggestions to city council.

Regarding transportation/infrastructure funding, transportation funding is based upon formulas established by the legislature. We need to continue to advocate for increased funding. Tom Points has been working with COMPASS for almost three years on identifying a funding option. We need to continue this work. Additionally, the mayor sits on the COMPASS Board and I have served twice as chair of the board. Our voice with COMPASS is critical. We cannot risk losing our influence on the COMPASS board as it's critical to the city long term.

Regarding the budget constraints and state limitations on revenue growth, we need to continue to advocate before the legislature. Treasure Valley Partnership began the work almost a year ago to go public, working collaboratively to address the revenue limitations and the negative impact the legislature has had on local government. I was part of this work for months before leaving office.

The reality is that the work of the city must go on until the next elections. The city cannot pause the initiatives that are critical to our community. An example of this is the Opioid Settlement Advisory Group that provides a forum for collaboration and coordination of initiatives and communication between key stakeholders. This group provides input into the distribution and oversight of the Opioid Funds per the settlement agreement.

Last but very important is our Healthy Impact Nampa Coalition. This community wide coalition identified 6 key pillars that are critical to our community. Those pillars are: Access to Transportation, Affordable and Stable Housing, Food Access and Security, Healthy Youth and Schools, Mental Health and Substance Misuse, Safe, Stable and Nurturing Families. This work is important to our community and must continue.

## 7. Do you believe growth is a burden to home/business owners?

Growth is both a burden and a blessing. Bringing well paying jobs to Nampa has reduced poverty, and allowed citizens to work closer to home. The growth has benefited some businesses and challenged many small business owners, especially in the construction field and other areas where the national companies have come in and made it difficult for small business to compete. It's also very unfortunate that the in-migration has caused housing prices to escalate to where the next generation cannot afford to buy a home.

If the Idaho State Legislature has not passed HB389, growth would have been funding the needs of the city and it would not have placed a tax burden on home/business owners. Today, with the negative impact of HB389, the tax burden has shifted to the citizens that were here before the growth.

The working group that I'm purposing needs to address all aspects of growth, the good and the bad. It's critical we get this done as quickly as possible, to provide some guidance to council in their decision making.

## 8. What are your thoughts on the current working dynamic between the Mayor and City Council? And, what recommendations would you offer for strengthening collaboration, communication, and effectiveness between the Mayor's Office and Council?

During my term as mayor, for some time I sent a weekly update. Unfortunately, I did not continue that. It needs to resume. Meeting monthly with each council member is something I did from day one and needs to continue. It's also important that council communicate their thoughts and needs to the mayor.

During most of my term as mayor, we had a positive working relationship. I appreciated the fact that we didn't always agree but we did respect one another.

Regarding building a positive working relationship, my hope is that the council itself will regain a positive working relationship with each other and the mayor (whoever is appointed). I will cover it in prayer and will prioritize good and healthy communication with all council members and will support council in their role. To achieve a healthy working relationship it takes everyone working together.

Lastly, having council members actively participating in and reporting out from the various boards and commissions is important. If we have not established the new council representation on boards and commission, this is something I would prioritize. For budgeting we established the Wednesday workshops to help inform and get input from council prior to the budget being presented. As mayor, I worked diligently to ensure the reports put before council were thorough and complete. It's the mayor's job to ensure council has correct, complete information to help council make the best decisions. I fully believe the mayor plays an important role in the council's success and likewise the council plays an important role in the mayor's success.

**9. Should the IH2C (formerly the Hispanic Culture Center) be repurposed for City of Nampa department/personnel needs?**

The IH2C needs to continue to meet the needs of the Hispanic community. My hope is that we can achieve this goal with the Idaho Hispanic Foundation on the first floor and city usage on the second floor. If we move away from that vision, it should be put to the citizens for their input. This is a project we were discussing prior to my departure, which paused with the change in administration. We need to revisit the financial performance, give consideration to the space needs for future city growth and schedule a joint meeting with the IH2C advisory committee and council members. If I remember correctly, Councilman Rodriguez and Councilwoman Jangula were on this working group. Revisiting the financial piece is critical.

If it seems that I didn't answer the question, I cannot take a firm position without current information and community input. This topic should be revisited with current financial information and with a clear understanding of the future of the Idaho Hispanic Foundation.

**10. Please explain your stance on inevitable growth, replacing old infrastructure, building new infrastructure and keeping up with demands for Public Safety.**

Public Works Water and Water Renewal staff provide the council with information on aging infrastructure and new infrastructure planning documents annually, if not more. The discussion regarding our aging infrastructure has taken place for years but has not been funded. The City has an established board, the Board of Appraisers, that provides information and makes recommendations, to city council each year, regarding the recommended rate increases to address the aging infrastructure. Rate increases are compared to surrounding cities to ensure we are in alignment with other cities in the Treasure Valley. Some of the current needs have not been funded and therefore some of the challenges and needs still remain. In visiting with Nampa citizens, many say that they don't mind the slight fee increases and would like the aging infrastructure addressed.

Building new infrastructure is important and typically not funded via property taxes. The Purdam trunkline was funded with one time tax funds and private investment and did not increase taxes. Transportation funding has several funding sources. Nampa has excellent staff that is pursuing funding for transportation. Working closely with COMPASS is also critical to our transportation funding. As you are aware, I have served twice as chair for COMPASS and the mayor sits on the board. COMPASS actively pursues additional funding from the legislature and is excellent at representing the needs of the local municipalities. Participation by the mayor on the COMPASS board is vital to addressing our transportation funding needs.

With the above comments, please note that I believe we must be committed to replacing aging infrastructure, as recommended by staff. We need to build new roads and continue to identify funding sources for the projects. The funding for water, water renewal and transportation are different funding sources than public safety, which is property tax.

Regarding public safety, over the past eight years the City of Nampa has reduced crime by almost 28%. Last year we used foregone taxes and applied it to police positions. Thank you to the council members for being willing to take foregone taxes to support the police needs. We need to continue prioritizing funding public safety so crime will not go up and we are able to meet the needs of our citizens. We have had one of the best police departments in the state, if not the nation. It would be my priority to keep Nampa as one of the safest places to live in Idaho. With the Meridian levy for police funding, their officers will make approximately \$14 per hour more than Nampa PD. We will lose officers at a great cost to the city. We need to have serious discussions regarding how to address the shortage. The new mayor must hit the ground running and address this shortage.

**11. Do you believe Nampa is facing a spending problem or a resource shortage? What is the most effective way to address the balance between available resources and City spending?**

Two years ago, the city budget reflected a 5% decrease in the operational budget. This was in anticipation of the financial challenges that we saw on the horizon. Last year we held the budget flat, even with raising costs, which meant we reduced spending in other areas. This year, I believe the goal is to do the same, in spite of rising costs. Fiscal and operational stewardship has been a priority for the past eight years. One thing we need to keep in mind is the funding source. Public safety takes the largest percentage of the property tax revenue. Water, Water Renewal and the Transportation departments are funded via separate funding, Enterprise funds. (For clarity, transportation does have some funding from property taxes). Our greatest shortage is property tax revenue, due to HB389. With a loss of over \$6 million in property tax revenue, from new construction, it is placing the tax burden on existing tax payers.

I've had a strong working relationship with CFO Doug Racine and appreciate that he has been very wise in fiscal stewardship and watching spending. The city has been careful with spending and it's hard to find places to cut without services being impacted. Regarding cuts, the city needs to be wise so that we don't hinder the core services we are responsible to provide.

**12. Please describe how you would balance immediate safety and functionality needs (such as preventing failures in culverts and waterlines) against long-term planning, while working collaboratively with the City Council under tight fiscal restraints.**

This question is blending a lot into one question but I'll start with culverts and waterlines. City staff has good records and data on aging culverts and waterlines. They also have good long-term planning in place to address the needs. The challenge has been that we have not historically funded based upon the needs. We have paused several times in the recent years on rate increases, when they were needed to fund our aging infrastructure. While we don't like rate increases, gradual rate increases that are tied to the need of aging infrastructure can be understood and supported. When we have not funded the needs, costs have gone up and the repairs are more costly. City staff has brought this before council for the past number of years. Today, we are playing catch up and that is hard to do.

The tight fiscal restraints, while in all funding sources, are exasperated in the property tax budget, and shared sale tax revenue, that impacts our General Government departments like Public Safety, Parks, Mayor's office, City Council, Legal, Finance, HR, IT, Facilities, Code Enforcement, Animal Control to name a few.

As stated by Doug Racine in the FY26 Budget book, “Nampa’s FY26 budget proposal encompasses the best of the City’s financial and operational practices that earned us the #1 & #2 ranked position on WalletHub’s best run cities in the US for the 9th year running. We seek to maximize the use of funds and minimize our expenditure footprint. The city is growing, and this presents significant challenges. Our parks, streets, public safety, and public works departments perform minor miracles every day by providing the best services at the lowest possible cost. Meeting the growth needs of the city frequently conflicts with the funding demands required to provide essential services”.

The City of Nampa has excellent staff that present plans to address our needs. We need to listen to staff and our CFO.

Regarding public safety, I do recommend we use foregone taxes to fund police positions or increases, whichever is agreed upon as the highest priority. Listening to Chief Huff is critical to understanding the city’s needs and challenges ahead.

Lastly, without seeing where the budget is headed this year, I’m sure we will need to take the full 3% and the 1% foregone taxes to fund police. We need to make decisions to support our next generation, families, and our hard working citizens. City staff has and will continue to work diligently to be good stewards of the resources.