

Aaron Householter. Questions

1. What is Salina's greatest asset? Greatest need? How can "working people" be actually involved? I

suspect other candidates will say "the people". While that is a safe answer, I think it's far too easy to simply say that. On the surface it is true, but a deeper look shows that many of our best and brightest have moved from our community from lack of quality jobs and lack of being a community worth staying in. I think Salina's greatest asset is the opportunity. The opportunity to put Salina in a position to appreciate the people. The exploitation of the working in this community must be stopped if our community is to grow. Not in size per se, but in stability, quality of life and economic growth.

Our greatest need is to create an environment that allows economic prosperity to take place. High taxes due to unneeded infrastructure causes taxes to go up. A good example are high rents for commercial property due in part to high property tax. If the rents are so high that business can't even get a start, how can we potentially create the next employer?

"Working people" can get involved by getting on boards to allow their voices and ideas to be heard as well as help form the future they want.

2. Salina has a reputation for paying low wages. If elected, will you promote this or try to change this?

Please elaborate. While mayor of Salina, I with other commissioners fired the chamber of commerce. We had given them 2 years to be more accountable and show the commission that they were doing what was best for Salina as to them handling the Economic Development for Salina. They failed miserably. Last, I checked they were still advertising "low wages" on their website as a reason to come to Salina. When interviewed for the Salina Journal this election I spoke as to the need for better jobs. Candidate Mike Hoppock, in an obvious attempt at a dig at me, wanted to share how informed he was by saying Salina is at basically at "zero unemployment". As a former Chamber of commerce board president, I think it shows how completely out of touch he and the chamber are about Salina and its workers. It's not about quantity of jobs, It's about quality of jobs. Helping to bring competition in Salina will help push up the wages. Having the chamber in charge of Economic development is giving the keys of the henhouse to the fox. Keeping jobs out of Salina has been their mantra here while towns like McPherson have encouraged bringing in business. It has zero to do with "a municipally owned electric plant" in McPherson as is often stated as a simple answer.

3. If the City gives more than nominal dollars to an organization, should that organization's meetings be open for the public to attend? **Absolutely.** I was angered with the funding of the new EDO being mostly paid by the city and only having an equal voice to organizations who pay little or nothing toward the funding. Another example of the "good old boy" network at work. The meetings, whenever trade secrets aren't involved, should be open to the public with ample time to hear from interested members of the public who after all...are paying for it.

4. Where do you stand on the City's funding of both the Salina Community Economic Development

Organization and the Chamber of Commerce? If elected, what, if any changes would you make? As I said above, I would push for more "seats on the board" if we are paying the bulk of the expenses to the EDO. I would move the EDO office of the chamber building. The chamber should be funded by its members. I am happy with the work done by "Visit Salina" and think the city should continue to fund them. Basically, the Chamber has had 50 years of time to try to do things right and we've ended up in a position nobody other than the few at the top who have benefited from, would agree is a place where we want or should be at.

5. The City Commission ultimately makes decisions that impact the City's 470 full-time and 10 part-time employees. How will you include these employees in decision making? We are a CEO type of commission. Basically, a board of directors. The commission has 1 "employee". The city manager. We set policy and the city manager implements it. By state law we are limited in our ability to discuss certain aspects of work with the employees. I however, have always felt that speaking with the workers, the person on the street, about their jobs could give potential "better ways to do things" to us. A lot of insight can be gained talking to the person about their needs for the job they do.

6. What is your opinion on commissioners being elected by district and why? If elected by district, who should draw the district lines? I completely support districting and think it has held Salina back by not having it. I'd like to think we could put a group together that could look at populations and put something together. My hopes would be increasing people's desire to vote and a stronger feeling of "my vote counts".

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