

## 2020 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE: Robert “Bob” Norris

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NAME: Robert “Bob” Norris

RUNNING FOR: Kootenai County Sheriff

CITY OF RESIDENCE: Coeur d’Alene

DATE OF BIRTH: 3/11/1963

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: Attended Long Beach State and Graduate of the LASO

Management Training Program

Certifications / Training

Executive Management Course CSU LONG BEACH/ LASD, 2011

Management Field Operations School, 2010

Active Shooter Certification, 2009

Internal Affairs Certification, 2008

Supervisory Leadership Program, 2001

Field Operations Supervisor Certification Basic Internal Affairs Certification, 1998

Patrol Supervision Certification, 1997

Custody Incident Command Certification, 1996

Advanced Officer Leadership, 1992

Field Training Officer Certification, 1991

Defensive Tactics Instructor Certification, 1990

Patrol Certification, 1987

Jail Operations Certification, 1984

Response Team, 1984 Olympics.

MILITARY EXPERIENCE: None

EXPERIENCE IN ELECTED OR APPOINTED OFFICES:

Appointed Chief of Law Enforcement Services for three contract cities. Youth Commissioner, Youth Commission.

Appointed Chief of Law Enforcement Services, 2011-2014 Lieutenant, 2009-2011

Sergeant Counter Terrorism, 2005-2009

Sergeant- Investigator, 2004

Sergeant Director of Community Policing Services, 2002-2004

Sergeant crime impact teams, 2000-2002 Sergeant Patrol, 1998-2000

Acting Lieutenant Jail Operations, 1997

Sergeant Jail Operation, 1996

Deputy/Special Assignment Investigator, 1994-1996

Deputy Patrol, 1987-1994

Custody Deputy 1984-1987, Sheriff's Academy

YEARS AS IDAHO RESIDENT: Purchased home, registered vehicle and obtained Idaho driver's license in 2013

FAMILY: Married with five kids and two grandkids

HOBBIES: Hiking, boating, civil war era antiques, my dogs and goats.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FOR OFFICE?

Kootenai County is growing like a weed. The issues we're experiencing are the kinds I've dealt with throughout my career. My experience is an asset and not a liability.

My experience means I bring ideas – NOT California policy – to Kootenai County. I bring ideas on transparency and avoiding mistakes that could put Kootenai taxpayers on the hook for unforeseen and significant liability.

For example, there are calls for more affordable housing here, which is understandable. But there is a hidden tax with that. Throughout my career I watched multi-family units constructed for affordable housing needs. But nobody foresaw the disproportionate number of calls for service, and eventual expense. Multi-family unit dwellings consume law enforcement resources at the expense of other parts of the County. Then there's the jail.

It is time to incorporate a community safety plan into our jail escape policy. The KCSO currently does not have one. An audible alert system, phone trees and pre assigned locations for responding units are standard protocols, and have been for years. It is time to have this conversation with the local community.

Also in the jail, The KCSO currently has 4 air tanks, (SCBA's), to evacuate approximately 500 people. I have been in a jail fire, 4 tanks is not enough to protect staff and evacuate prisoners.

Currently there are no fire resistant jackets. This presents a significant safety and liability issue to the tax-payer of Kootenai county.

My real-life experience could help avoid big mistakes. All the law-enforcement degrees, certifications and awards a candidate has will not replace the boots-on-the-ground experience I bring. As your Sheriff, this is a significant asset to you – the citizen.

#### WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THREE OF THE BIGGEST ISSUES YOU'LL FACE?

These are all top issues:

1. Developing a communication platform between the office, community and other local

officials so the Office understands the concerns of the community and can stay ahead of the current growth trajectory.

1. Making the Sheriff's Office a destination agency and not a "stepping stone" for other

departments. The vacancies and attrition within the Office need to be addressed.

1. Protecting Citizens' Rights while they are being systematically eroded.

#### IF ELECTED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO RESOLVE THESE ISSUES?

A top to bottom assessment of the Office, identifying areas for improvement, evaluating options and then implementing the best one(s).

Changing the culture of the Sheriff's Office from one of management to leadership.

Host town halls throughout the County and identify what issues are important to the community, how the Sheriff's Office can address those issues and improve upon them, and then identify an action plan for the staff to execute those objectives.

I would like the residents to consider a "Town Sheriff" program where selected Deputies take ownership over defined areas within the County. I want the community to be able to interact with -- and have access to -- their Deputies.

My experience has proven that developing these kinds of relationships (i.e., feedback loops) with the community helps Deputies identify where improvements can be made and get quicker turnaround times for citizens' needs. Calling 911 should not be the primary feedback loop for any Sheriff's Office and not every quality of life situation rises to the level of an emergency.

The people within the Sheriff's Office are terrific people and want to do as good of a job as possible serving and protecting the community. My primary focus is to enable them to serve the community to their maximum ability by ensuring they have a work environment that fosters ownership over projects and the tools necessary to execute them. That is my role as the leader of the organization.

#### WHAT SPECIFIC SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS JOB?

I know what to do and the mistakes to avoid to help transition the Sheriff's Office into a larger pillar organization. The County is growing and we cannot afford mistakes, especially costly ones with tight budgets.

I have several years' experience in all the major functions of a Sheriff's Office, including the primary responsibilities of custody (the jail) and patrol. My experience also includes working gang units, narcotics, investigations, counter terrorism and budgets.

There are two primary areas of experience where I believe I outshine the other candidates. The first is I am the only candidate who has worked, supervised and managed assets in both the jail and patrol divisions. This is a critical distinction.

And second, my experience means we can avoid the mistakes that other Sheriffs have during rapid growth phases, like what Kootenai County is experiencing. There are little areas where my experience can add up big for the County.

Like addressing the hidden jail safety liabilities for the Deputies, inmates and surrounding residents. Or making the case to the Commissioners where hidden "taxes" may exist from poor policy decisions, like the rapid growth in multi-family and low

income housing. We all pay for these hidden expenses with more calls for service and lower quality of life. A lot of people relocated from places like that and do not want to see it here.

And finally, I'm running so we can create a transparent Sheriff's Office. I do not believe that it is as transparent with the community as it can be. The citizens here have a right to know what is happening and to be confident that law enforcement is focused on protecting your Rights, keeping the quality of life high and the community safe from criminals.

#### WHY SHOULD VOTERS ELECT YOU, RATHER THAN AN OPPONENT?

We can all look at the candidates' websites for information. The problem is not what they say but what they are not telling voters. This withholding of information can make a big difference for a voter.

Often, you'll see them tout their degrees, certifications or budgetary prowess, but none of that matters if you don't have real, boots-on-the-ground experience...the kind that keeps the County from making costly mistakes. That's the kind of experience I bring from my 30-year career.

I have seen a lot of mistakes that impacted public safety and cost taxpayers dearly when it was rapidly growing. I won't let that happen here.

I chose North Idaho to be the place I spend the last chapter of my life. Now it's growing aggressively and with it the chance for our quality of life to diminish. Whether it's proactive policing, creating at-risk youth programs (non-governmental), jail fires, escapes, fires or understanding where the hidden taxes are to law enforcement and you the citizen...I know how to avoid the costly mistakes. No other candidate has the experience to manage both the jail and patrol functions like I have.

The Kootenai County Deputy Sheriff's Association Members recognize the challenges facing the Sheriff's Office and they believe I am the right person to lead it during this rapid growth phase.

All of the candidates wanted the endorsement, yet I was the one chosen.

The Members voted 2-to-1 over the internal candidate, a 28-year veteran of the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office. That says a lot about how the Membership views the challenges facing the Sheriff's Office.

Experience, responsibility and leadership are the guiding principles of my campaign. I hope to earn your vote.

