Christopher Burns District 5

1. What motivated you to run for a City Council seat, and what is your vision for serving the public if elected?

I after I retired from the Colorado Springs Police Department, I served for over two years as a volunteer on the City Council Subcommittee for Law Enforcement Transparency and Advisory Committee (LETAC). During that time, I had an opportunity to watch City Council and I was dissatisfied with many of the decision and realized I could do a better job. My top three priorities are public safety, housing affordability and infrastructure development. Obviously, these are long-term and continuing goals which I will seek balanced approaches.

2. Nationally, government has been focused on finding waste and fraud in government through DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency. Would you be in favor of a similar effort within the City of Colorado Springs? Where do you think efficiencies could be found within city departments?

I am cautiously optimistic about the work of DOGE. The city budget and departments should be carefully reviewed and if redundancies or inefficiencies are found they should be corrected. At this time, I do not have a specific area, but as I learn about the city system, I will prioritize efficiency and fiscal responsibility.

3. Are there any new taxes, fees, or TABOR retention ballot issues you'd like to see put before voters? Please, explain.

I am in favor of a review and possible increase of Lodgers and Automobile Rental Tax, as that has been shown to be below the rate of other similar cities. This tax would be paid for by tourism to the city and not the city's residents.

4. What does responsible city growth and development look like to you? Do you have any issues with how City Council has handled development, annexation, etc. in the recent past?

The city is growing whether we want it to or not. If the choice is to freeze new construction, we are asking for significant increases in housing costs. The city should take a proactive approach by implementing policies that encourage responsible development while protecting existing residents from higher costs.

I am concerned about the recent flagpole annexations as the costs of expanding utilities and stretching city services to these new areas is economically questionable to me. These plans must be thorough, include lower priced units and be economically feasible into the future for new residents.

5. Should non-profit entities receive taxpayer funds to provide services to certain sectors of the public? Would you advocate for those non-profits to provide detailed reports to city council on how taxpayer money is spent?

I am open to having non-profit entities receive taxpayer funds, provided the service they provide can be shown to be more economical for the city then the city can. If this were to happen, I would be a strong proponent for accurate record keeping as to how these funds were used.

6. In 2024, the current city council members voted in favor of a resolution stating that Colorado Springs is not a sanctuary city. Do you agree or disagree with that vote and why?

I agree Colorado Springs should not be known as a sanctuary city. Unfortunately, the federal government has failed over the last four year to provide reasonable controls for undocumented aliens entering our country. These people will go to cities which are known to provide the best (taxpayer funded) benefits. I will not vote to use Colorado Springs taxpayer money to provide support services to undocumented aliens.

7. What is your view on the current illegal immigration problem in our city?

As a prior city police officer, I frequently interacted with members of the Undocumented Alien community. Most were hard working, but very vulnerable to labor trafficking due to their unrecognized status. While the illegal immigration situation if Colorado Springs is not as bad as in other cities (i.e. Denver), we must maintain visibility on it and work with our federal partners to address it. We should actively work with federal immigration services to remove individuals identified as Criminal Aliens.

8. Taxpayer funds are used to provide services to homeless people. Do you think this money is well spent (or not) and should more funds be (or not be) committed to homeless programs?

My opinion at this point; I do not have a specific area of homeless funding which I can say is not used efficiently. As this is complex problem, it can be difficult to balance assistance without providing and incentive, which can make the problem worse. As I learn more about this area, I will look for way to increase efficiencies.

9. Housing affordability has been a hot topic in recent years. What's your solution to the problem? Should taxpayer funds be used to address this issue?

The city has a crucial role in ensuring access to affordable housing for all residents. This includes both owner-occupied as well as rental units. The city should take a proactive approach by implementing policies that encourage responsible development while protecting existing residents from higher costs.
One area I feel strongly about is working with developers to create mixed-income housing. By increasing the number of lower income available units, the cost of housing to the occupant can be reduced. Additionally, the city should invest in programs that support first-time homebuyers and renters.
Preserving existing affordable housing is just as important as building new units. The city should explore providing assistance for homeowners to maintain their properties, and support nonprofit housing organizations that manage affordable housing. Additionally,

allowing for single accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or more multi-family housing in areas can also increase the supply of affordable homes.

10. Red light cameras and speed cameras have been approved by city council members. What are your opinions about red light cameras and speed cameras?

I do not like redlight or speed cameras. But I had a far greater dislike of recovering mangled bodies of people involved in auto crashes as a police officer. Whether we want to admit it or not, these cameras change driving behavior, and reduce serious auto crashes. I understand the financing for these systems is a point of contention, but this can be mitigated with proper oversight.

11. Is there anything additional you'd like to share about yourself with voters?

I have led a life of service to my nation as an active-duty Army officer, to the state of Colorado as a member of the National Guard, and to the city of Colorado Springs as a career police officer. During that time, I also earned Bachelors and Master degrees in business. Now that I have retired from these professions, I have the experience and time to continue my serve the citizens of Colorado Springs as an elected City Councilperson.