

**Candidates Questionnaire –2018  
Washington County, Texas**

**Luther Hueske, Candidate for County Commissioner, Precinct 2**

1. Why have you decided to run for election at this time?

I am running for re-election. I thoroughly enjoy what I am tasked to do as an elected official. I have the **EXPERIENCE** to continue to advance Washington County into the future. My past involvement in the areas of economic development, workforce training, as a business owner and a community supporter has served me well in this position. I like giving back to the community I grew up in and that has been good to my family.

2. What key competencies do you feel you possess to be an elected official?

Overview of my financial skills and **EXPERIENCE**:

---I owned and operated a successful industrial business in Washington County for 25 years. Did the daily budget, accounts receivable, accounts payable and all other aspects of running the business.

---Also during this time in another company that I started, I developed, patented, manufactured and marketed a hay raking/baling apparatus throughout the state of Texas.

---As head of the Blinn College Technical Education Advisory Committee, while we were building a training center with private funds, I was deeply involved in the fundraising, design and construction of the A. W. Hodde Jr. Technical Education Center. We also just finished an expansion of the center with a grant from the Federal government where I served on the Construction and Equipment Acquisition committees.

---Serving on the Washington County Healthy Living Association Board as the County's liaison, I helped with the securing of private funds for the planning, building and furnishings of the new Senior Center. I also served on the Building Committee.

---While Fire Chief at Salem Volunteer Fire Department, I was in charge of management and enlarging our fleet of fire trucks with a very tight budget. I was in command of all fire scenes, training, record keeping, and reporting.

---I manage the daily operations of our 160-plus year old family farm.

Highlights of my Leadership **EXPERIENCE** include:

---Serving on the Washington County Healthy Living Association Board and the Building Committee for our new Senior Center. This committee was responsible for raising the necessary funds for the new facility and its daily operations with very little government monies received (apart from some of the meal expenses).

---Founding Chairman of the A.W. Hodde Jr. Technical Education Center Advisory Board at Blinn College. The center was built mostly from private funds, which I played a key role in securing.

---Chairman of the Austin/Washington County Farm Service Agency.

---Past Fire Chief for the Salem Volunteer Fire Department and current member.

---Past President of the Washington County Fire Fighters Association.

---Past Chairman of the Board and current member of the Brenham Economic Development Foundation, serving as Chairman 4 years.

My other public service experience includes:

---Serving 2 terms on the Salem Lutheran Church Council and numerous standing committees.

---Serving on the budget committee of Salem Church during one of our down-turned economic years.

---Long time member of the Salem Volunteer Fire Department and currently on our Building Committee.

---Serving on the Economic Restructuring Committee for the Main Street Brenham downtown revitalization program.

My background with Human Resource issues includes:

---At the business I owned and operated for 25 years, I did everything from hiring, firing, and evaluation of performance for advancements and raises. I wrote and enforced the employee handbook policies.

---I was responsible for the hiring, managing and firing of the Office Manager for the Farm Service Agency.

---I was on the committee that hired the current CEO of the Chamber and EDF, also for other EDF staff positions in my tenure as Chairman of the Board of the EDF.

My **EXPERIENCE** on local economic issues comes partly from owning and operating a business in Washington County, it gave me the knowledge that our local economic conditions are rarely controlled by local issues (the issue with Blue Bell was an exception). The companies here are producing items that are shipped locally, state and nation wide and through out the world. So, we also need to watch and study the trend in other area's not only which companies are cutting hours or laying off in our County. What happens within the energy industry worldwide is greatly affected by our close proximity to Houston. We have a lot of retired folks in our community that are on a fixed income and their spending habits in our local stores are affective by the stock market and interest rates.

My **EXPERIENCE** includes Strategic Planning initiatives:

---Rewrote the bylaws of the Salem Volunteer Fire Department.

---Reviewed and helped update the bylaws of the Economic Development Foundation of Brenham.

---Wrote various contracts and policies for Washington County.

---Worked on the application for a United States Patent.

---Wrote and delivered the annual report for the Economic Development Foundation for 4 years.

---Worked on the Workforce Maximization task force, a partnership between local manufacturers, Brenham ISD, Burton ISD, Blinn College, EDF, and local business leaders.

---Participated in numerous strategic planning sessions with the County, City, EDF and the Chamber throughout the years.

---Was involved in the studying and development of affordable housing "starter homes" for young people entering the local workforce, to insure the availability of housing for workers at expanding local companies and new companies moving here.

3. If you are elected, what do you consider to be the top priorities to work on?

---Continue to work on **Keeping Taxes Low** as possible while continuing to find innovative ways to improve County services. We have a lot of senior citizens on a fixed income and our young folks are busy trying to raise their families and save for their dream homes. I believe in helping our young and older citizens.

---The safety of our judicial court system, not only for County employees but also for the juries and all other people that utilize the Court system.

---The maintenance and improvement of our County Road system.

4. What do you consider to be the top issue affecting our local economic growth?

The national economy seems to be getting stronger with the new leadership in the White House. We have been aggressive in our training of our workforce to keep up with the latest technology and business practices. Locally, we need fiscally conservative leaders planning our budgets. This also needs to allow for proper planning for the future. And we must focus on public safety, whether it is for health, fire or law enforcement.

5. What can you do as an elected official to help small business in the community?

---Continue to keep taxes as low as possible while maintaining excellent service for our constituents.

---Continue to support the tax phase-in incentive program to lure growth and give some relief during the construction or expansion of a small business.

---Continue to support the vocational education program whether it be at one our local school districts or at Blinn College. These programs gives future workers the training and knowledge to enter our local workforce.

6. What is your opinion of offering economic development incentives to lure capital investment and jobs to the community?

As a former business owner and past Chairman and EDF Board member for ten years, I have had a lot of experience working with incentives and have negotiated with numerous

companies to keep or bring them here. Offering an incentive is a fundamental way businesses are lured to a location decision.

7. How important do you feel the relationship is between Washington County government officials and the City of Brenham officials, City of Burton officials and the unincorporated communities? How could these relationships be improved?

When I was first elected, the relationship with the City of Brenham was on rocky ground. Through the renegotiation of the Inter Local Agreements (ILA's), the situation went down hill even more. After finalizing the ILA's, and all had time to settle down, our relationship has been good. During negotiation, there is a lot of give and take for the betterment of our community (city/county), and through these ILA's we're not duplicating services that cost taxpayers more money. There is a very small number of cities/counties that get along and cooperate as well as we do here.

I think we have a good working relationship with the City of Burton also. We put EMS personnel there to have a faster response time for emergency medical services. This has worked out wonderfully and has saved a few lives already. The leaders in the City stepped up with the additional funding that the EMS budget did not have to cover the expense for this expansion. We are currently constructing a new building to house the full-time EMS personnel.

In the community of Chappell Hill, we also have an EMS personnel station downtown in the old Chappell Hill Fire Station. This community also stepped up to cover the additional expense to have full-time emergency medical personnel there.

In the Washington area, we will have a section in the new Old Washington Fire Station on Hwy 105 when it is completed in the near future. This area's citizens also stepped up and are helping with having emergency medical personnel located there.

I believe that if we continue to communicate and work with the leaders of these respective communities, it will be better for all of the folks in the county.

8. Do you support the Washington County Chamber's "Government Advocacy Policy Statements"?

I agree with all the statements and have been involved with the planning, studying, and implementation of various programs for the betterment of our wonderful community that are included in these statements.

The only thing I would add would be a statement against our state's (Texas) "unfunded mandates" that get pushed on local government not only to implement but also to finance them with money from our local taxpayers. These "unfunded mandates" take up a large part of our County's budget each year.

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