

1- What are the top 3 challenges you feel Saratoga Springs currently faces?

1. Lack of a sufficient financial reserve.

When we moved to Saratoga Springs six years ago the city had a sizable financial reserve. Unfortunately, this reserve was spent just before the meltdown of the housing market that sparked the current economic crisis. While our city has thus far weathered the downturn better than other government agencies have, they accomplished this by a sizable increase in our taxes right at a time when families were also being affected by the economy. An increase in taxes may well have been necessary but I can't help but believe that had we not squandered our reserve our city could have adapted to the current economic environment with less of an impact on it's citizens.

In many ways I think the people would be better served if their government entities acted more like a business. In order to succeed in business you must grow when you can afford to grow and you must always be prepared for the unexpected. As a city we still do not have sufficient reserves in place to prepare us to face economic difficulties that we may face in the future.

2. Insufficient EMS services (Ambulance)

Currently the city has one high-mileage ambulance to respond to medical emergencies within the city. This ambulance has been in the shop several times over the last couple months because of engine problems. The last time it was taken to the shop because they couldn't get it to start. While Lehi city has graciously allowed us to borrow their spare ambulance for the times ours is in the shop, I don't feel we should be relying on them to provide for the safety of our citizens. If it were my family in trouble I would want to know that my city had an ambulance that could respond quickly in an emergency.

3. High number of un-kept rental and bank-owned homes

Saratoga Spring was in a state of rapid residential expansion when the housing market collapsed. As a result of speculative residential building our city has a good deal of residential homes that were purchased by out-of-state investors and homes that fell into foreclosure. While rental homes are not always a problem too many of these investment and foreclosed homes have been allowed to remain out of compliance with our city landscape ordinances. These homes lower the property values for all; they detract from the beauty of our communities, harbor pests (rodents, mosquitoes, and other insects) and in many instances create fire hazards in our residential neighborhoods.

2- If elected, how are you going to address these 3 top challenges?

1. Lack of a sufficient financial reserve.

As a member of the city council I would work with the Mayor, Council and

city managers to establish a budget reserve (rainy day fund) that would be used as a last resort to cover unexpected budget shortfalls. Such a fund could be used to prevent tax increases on our citizens. The problem I see with using tax increases to overcome unexpected shortfalls is that tax increases are often permanent. If we had a sizable reserve (8-15% of budget) we could use our reserve to carry us through hard times.

2. Insufficient EMS services (Ambulance)

As a member of the City Council I would look into the feasibility of selling/trading one of our current fire engines and replacing it for a multi-purpose engine that could serve as both a fire engine and ambulance. If we had a multi-purpose engine and fixed our current ambulance so that it was reliable we would have a backup in case one ambulance was out of service.

3. High number of un-kept rental and bank-owned homes

Too often our code enforcement is only responding to landscaping issues when a neighbor becomes frustrated enough to call and complain. Part of the reason is due to the fact that our code enforcer is kept busy responding to the same properties time and time again. Many of these properties are rental properties that often owned by individuals living outside of the state who rarely if ever see these properties. Code enforcement gives them a warning after neighbors complain about their weeds and only after the warning do they cut down the weeds to come back into compliance. Then they do nothing with their property until the next warning comes. Since there is no incentive for them to take better care of their property they don't.

As a member of the City Council I would push to create automatic fines after code enforcement is called on the same property about the same issue multiple times. I've seen too many beautiful yards die and turn to weeds after a bank has taken possession of a house. We need to apply city code regardless of ownership.

3- What impact do you think that Commercial Development has on the City, and how are you going to increase/decrease this impact?

Commercial development, if handled correctly can have an incredible positive effect on our City. Sound commercial development will not only bring in more tax revenues into the City it can also help to improve the quality of life for our residents. As a city we need to focus on a more holistic approach to development. Instead of focusing on one building/business at a time we need to work on designing a commercial center that will be an asset to our city for years to come. We need a development that we can go with our families and enjoy an evening, a walkable commercial district that offers multiple options for dining and entertainment. Creating such a development will enhance the quality of life for our citizens and will bring in needed revenue from surrounding cities.

If not well-planned commercial development can help to destroy many of the qualities that set Saratoga Springs apart from the other cities in the valley. If we allow any and all commercial developments to come however, whenever, and wherever they want we will destroy the beauty of this city along with our property rights. I do not want to see our city become a long strip mall. With proper planning and foresight we can bring in developments that can bring tax revenue while at the same time enhancing the beauty and appeal of the city.

4- Without comparing yourself to the other candidates, what makes you qualified for the position you are running for?

I think the most important qualification for any public servant is unquestioned ethics. As citizens we allow government to hold many of our rights in trust and as such it is critical that those we elect into government positions are worthy of that trust. Over the six years my family has lived in Saratoga Springs we have been involved in service to our community. This desire to be of service and better to my community is the reason I am now running for a position on the City Council. I believe nothing can do more to enhance the quality of a community and a city than the active involvement of its citizens. If we as citizens are constantly striving to better our communities we will in turn better our city.

Besides voluntary service in my community I have also made it a point to attend and actively participate in as many City Council meetings as possible. This regular attendance has allowed me to become very familiar with the needs, opportunities and challenges our city is currently facing and has given me insight into the normal operating functions of the City Council. As a result I will be able to start working and contributing right away without a need to be brought up-to-speed. I think regular attendance at City Council meetings should be a prerequisite for serving on the Council. Not only does it prepare one for the position it also shows commitment.

The combination of my work in the computer field and my education in business (MBA) has conditioned me to always look for increased efficiencies. This skill will help to ensure we are not wasting your tax dollars. This has also helped me to better relate to business owners in the city, to see their struggles and identify areas where the city can help to increase their and consequently our success.

5- What are your goals/plans for the Saratoga Springs Police Department?

My overriding goal for the Saratoga Springs Police Department is to help it become a part of this city the residents can be proud of. When we drive down the road and spot one of our police officers we should feel a sense of safety and pride, not a sense of fear and panic. The police department is part of our cities Public Safety division and exists solely to help ensure public safety; they should never be looked to as a source of revenue. Taxation through policing is wrong and should never be practiced in our city.

At the inception of the police department there was a lot of discussion about the importance of community policing. We were told that our police department was going to focus on becoming a part of our communities. We were going to see officers frequently walking through our parks and subdivisions getting to know the residents and helping them feel protected. I would like to see this aspect of community policing more often.

I applaud the Police Department for pushing volunteerism and community involvement through their Citizen's Academy and their Citizens Assisting Police (CAPS) program. By promoting these programs the Police department can not only provide more services to the community by utilizing volunteers they can also help to dispel myths by informing citizens about the actual workings within our police department.

6- What are your goals/plans for the Saratoga Springs Fire Department?

As with the Police Department I like the use of volunteers in the fire department. We have many loyal capable citizens in our city that would love a chance to help keep our city safe. We should continue to use volunteer in all areas of our city including the Fire Department. I think it would be great to see a Citizen's Academy similar to that run by the Police Department where citizens can see first-hand what our Fire Department is doing to keep our city safe.

Although I am a big fan of using volunteers where appropriate, when my family is in danger I want to be sure those who come to my aid are properly trained and have the equipment they need to fulfill their duties.

7- What resolutions and or ordinances do you feel need to be created or modified within the next 4 years?

- I would like to modify compensation given to our Mayor and City Council. Instead of a monthly stipend I would like to see the pay be based on attendance at City Council. I feel by doing this we can keep our elected officials more accountable to the people.
- Our city needs to create an ordinance to specifically address the proper keeping of chickens and bees in residential neighborhoods so property owners can exercise their rights without infringing upon the rights of their neighbors. While I would love to be on the council when this is decided to help ensure property owner rights are not abused, it would be disappointing to know our current council cannot handle this issue appropriately before January.
- I would like to see a change in the way we handle code enforcement as it comes to weed and landscape issues. Improperly maintained yards are a fire hazard in our community, they are bringing down property values in the city and providing habitat for rodents and mosquitoes.

8- What is your favorite US Founding Father quote?

A general dissolution of principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy. While the people are virtuous they cannot be subdued; but when once they lose their virtue then will be ready to surrender their liberties to the first external or internal invader.

Samuel Adams, letter to James Warren, February 12, 1779

It is really hard to pick "my favorite" founding father quote because there are so many worthy quotes that trade-off being my favorite depending upon the circumstances of the time. This is definitely one of my favorite founding father quotes because it speaks of the origin of America's strength. I firmly believe that America has prospered and has become great because we were blessed by God. I believe this land is a sacred and chosen land that will allow those who serve God to prosper.

Along with mentioning the strengths of America it warns of America's one weakness, and that is that the blessings that made us the great nation we are will be revoked if we allow ourselves to lose our virtue. One great example is our Constitution. The Constitution was a document inspired by God for the good of man. Speaking of the Constitution, John Adams said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people it is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." The constitution has kept us a free people and will continue to do so as long as we remain a moral and religious people.

9- What do you believe the place of the US Constitution is in local government?

When local government officials are sworn in they swear to uphold, obey and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Utah. Both documents were written with the intent to protect the individual rights of citizens from an over-reaching government. Our local government officials should become intimately familiar with both Constitutions so they can fulfill their oath of office and serve the people as our founders intended.

This over-reaching tendency of government powers is evident at the Federal level. This country was founded with the idea that government powers should be held as close to the people as possible. It was the states/colonies that created a federal government; it was the states that held a majority of the powers. Over time the Federal Government has taken more and more power upon itself, thus pulling these powers further away from the citizens. It is my opinion that we as citizens, cities, and states need to begin to bring governmental powers back to where they belong.

10- What other question should of been asked, and what is your response?

Can services like a library and senior center be provided by a fiscally conservative city?

Yes, I think the key with these and other services is starting out small but plan for growth. It is important to remember what size of a city we are and add services accordingly. This is a great time to use creative thinking and resource pooling to provide solutions. We can use what we have now to start providing some library and senior center services today and have a plan for responsible growth as we head into the future.