

Watchmen Voter Guide for Kootenai County Commissioner District 2
** Click on each candidate's name to see their completed questionnaire **

	Chris Fillios	Bruce Mattare
1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	<p>My name is Chris Fillios; County Commissioner District 2; I am the current Chairman of the BOCC. The ongoing challenge of growth has caught the attention of many of our county residents, and I intend to meet the challenge as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instituting impact fees for new residential and commercial development; - Explore the purchase of open space – in the hundreds of acres; - Expand our Motor Vehicle and Licensing departments via our new facility known as Kootenai North (the former Kootenai Electric offices on Dakota Avenue in Hayden); - Increase efforts for our lakes' health and safety. - Maintain control over property tax increases via the introduction of impact fees. 	<p>Bruce Mattare, County Commissioner currently held by Chris Fillios. I'm running for Commissioner because I've learned of many troubling issues being ignored by my opponent. Additionally, I don't believe it is moral to present oneself as a Conservative Republican only to thank members of the opposing party for switching party affiliation to help one win the Republican Primary. It's time for honest leadership in the county.</p>
2. When do you believe life begins and how does this belief affect your executive decision making?	<p>I believe life begins at conception, though this is not a factor in my decision making process at the county level.</p>	<p>I believe it begins at conception. I believe that public funds should not be used to harm any life in any way.</p>
3. What is your opinion of eminent domain? Under what circumstances do you believe it should be used?	<p>Eminent domain is an integral part of a jurisdiction's police power and is legal when used for public benefit. I do NOT support its use for private development, and in accordance with Idaho Code 7-701A(2): "Eminent domain shall not be used to acquire private property." However, the same code later states that eminent domain can be used to "effectuate economic development," but only where private use is expressly provided in the constitution of the State of Idaho</p>	<p>I believe that eminent domain is necessary for a community and that it should ONLY be used for significant public projects, not for private "for-profit" projects.</p>
4. Do you support or oppose forced annexation? Why or why not?	<p>I do not support forced annexation, as it acts against a property owner's right to control his/her property, in addition to increasing the property owner's property taxes. It also adds to the infrastructure burden of the potentially annexing municipality.</p>	<p>I do not support forcing property owners to join a government jurisdiction outside of its current jurisdiction.</p>

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5. Our county is growing very rapidly, where do you see we need to improve infrastructure and what are your plans to improve it?	The County has very little control over infrastructure as we do not have jurisdiction over roads, schools, water, etc. In Kootenai County, we have over 40 taxing districts, each with their own commissioners or directors. The County's jurisdiction is limited to passing ordinances that enable us to interact with the other agencies.	The biggest shortfalls are with personnel, which is what we need to fix first before looking at significant capital infrastructure projects. I would also look at making sure our software is current to ensure we don't need to maintain excessive staffing to perform jobs the software can do. I'd also want to explore leasing space, compared to the county spending millions becoming a real estate holding firm. One of the problems with rapid growth is you do not know when it will end. Whatever real estate needs you think you have today could be insufficient in three to five years from now. To me there is nothing worse than spending tens of millions on a building that ends up being too small for county needs when completed or shortly thereafter.
6. Due to the rapid growth in our communities, our schools are reaching maximum capacity. What are your plans to accommodate more schools to meet the growing needs of the increased population?	Again, the County is not in the education business. Schools are under the jurisdiction of municipalities, and as such are governed by their own school boards and administrative staff.	The schools are their own taxing districts, so the BOCC has limited authority (if any) over this district and how it grows. However, I would encourage meaningful impact studies and fees to construct schools, so the growth pays for itself. I would also look at designing and constructing them in a way that makes it cost effective to convert the structures into other uses as demographics change. I've lived in areas where schools were converted due to demographics, only to later be converted back to schools as student populations grew again.
7. Do you support or oppose Urban Renewal Districts? Why or why not?	URD's have their place and can be used beneficially for our community and we do have examples: Cd'A Library, Kroc Center, McEuen Park, and others. However, the appointment of directors by city councils, the election of which the County residents have no say in, needs to be changed. Additionally, the lengthy expiration periods of URD's need to be shortened. I do support them, though not as currently implemented.	The intent of them is to allow municipalities to have some authority over deteriorated areas. The Idaho Code 50-2002 reads pretty clearly that it is meant to reverse situations that are a menace to an area. The problem is how that is determined. I think some political leaders have used it as a mechanism outside of its original intent. If there is a situation where an area has become so bad that it becomes crime ridden, drug infested and a true menace to the surrounding community, then I can see where having a mechanism like this can be productive for a community. However, if this is a way to displace people in functioning communities so others can profit off of it, then I do not support it.

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8. Do you support or oppose requirements for developers to pay for community infrastructure?	I support the use of impact fees to pay for infrastructure where and how allowed. The County is about to hold public hearings to consider the use of impact fees for fire districts, KCEMSS, and soon specific County departments . These impact fees would be applied to all NEW residential and commercial construction. I have already sixcusset this with a few members of the development/builder community, and they appear amenable. Whether the developer pays or the County imposes impact fees, it should be assumed that the homebuyer will ultimately pay for the improvements.	I support developers collecting and paying taxing districts impact fees to help pay for growth and infrastructure. Growth should pay for itself.
9. In your opinion, if elected, who do you see yourself accountable to and why?	I am accountable to ALL the residents of Kootenai County. This is so because the election of county commissioners is truly countywide. In my role as county commissioner, I often have to balance between and among competing interests, and as such, I must frequently put any partisan leanings aside.	The voters. They elected me.
10. Do you support or oppose the idea of a county manager? Why or why not?	I support the idea of a county commission manager for the following reasons: 1. Kootenai County is too big to be managed by three COO's; 2. Five part-time commissioners would enable a manager to run the daily operations of the County, while the commissioners set strategic direction for the County; 3 Due to the current demands of the job, a younger well educated and experienced individual could not assume this position without risking his/her career once unelected or choosing not to run again; 4. Having five versus three county commissioners makes it more difficult for an individual or group to gain control of the County. 5. If we value the structure of private industry, then why not replicate it.	I oppose a statutory county manager as defined by Idaho statute. The county manager would take over the budget officer function, which is currently held by the Clerk's Office. Two Utah counties did this and it created significant problems of accountability. I also don't like the idea of having a statutory position of county manager because these positions are often temporarily filled by career people from other communities who may not have the same value system as this community. They may only concern themselves with padding their resumes for that next better paying opportunity and leave us with the consequences of their decisions/actions. Conversely, the BOCC can hire a manager right now to administer the departments under the BOCC. This is no different than a Chief Deputy or Undersheriff position. I prefer this option.
11. With the rapid growth of the county, do you think we need more commissioners?	Yes, if we restructure as I indicated above in Item 10.	No. More commissioners can hurt our community. If you don't like the direction of county government, citizens can change it in two years or one election cycle. With more commissioners it can take two to three election cycles to manifest change. This hurts the citizens.

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12. In recent years some groups have advocated for legalizing marijuana in our state, do you support or oppose the legalization of marijuana? Why or why not?	I do not support the legalization of marijuana, except as prescribed by a physician. I believe that legalization leads to other potentially harmful drug use.	I oppose it because the concentration of THC is multiples higher than several decades ago. It is harming our young people (our future) and almost always leads to more crime in communities that sell it legally. The last thing any community needs is a company marketing a product to young people can harm them.
13. Do you believe the ARPA funds come with Federal requirements that might conflict with Idaho values? Why or why not? How will you advocate for the funds to be used locally?	For the past few months, the county has dutifully combed through the Federal requirements for the use of the ARPA funds. We have an ARPA Task force, composed of individuals with financial, grant and legal expertise, and they have concluded that the use of these funds - \$32M - does not pose a threat to state sovereignty, or make burdensome demands. Shortly, the Task Force will make their recommendations as to the best use of these funds, and as we - the BOCC – decide on the best uses with the greatest benefit to county residents, that is how I will advocate. Requests from the various entities including outside the county, exceed \$90M.	I do not. I've spoken at length with other elected officials and am confident that such monies do not come with strings attached that will conflict with what is best for this community. I also think it's worth understanding what the consequences are for not following such requirements. As it has been explained to me, if monies needed to be re-paid it would be at 0% interest. This leads to the next important point: The funds should only be used for capital projects that we would do anyway with existing taxpayer money. Never for "pet" or nice-to-have projects. I see this as our money that we've already paid through federal taxation and are due back for this community. I believe it is immoral to allow longtime residents to be taxed out of this community because we're not willing to accept such funds for projects we must build anyhow.
14. Do you believe the six Row Officers (assessor, sheriff, prosecuting attorney, treasurer, coroner, and clerk) should be appointed or stay elected? Why or why not?	The OFG (Optional Form of Government) Study Commissioner has determined that the Row Officers remain ELECTED, and that we hire a commission manager and increase the number of county commissioners to five. The commission manager would oversee the 17 departments that currently report to the BOCC. I expect the five commissioners would be part-time, with salaries reduced to under one-third the current rate of pay. They would retain their traditional roles of legislative and judicial functions for such passing ordinances, ruling on land use issues, etc. I support a public vote in the general election in November to decide this potential change. Most counties in the U.S. have at least five commissioners; none in Idaho.	These positions should continue to be elected and accountable to the voters.

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<p>15. What is your background and why do you believe it qualifies you for this position?</p>	<p>I have over 40 years' experience in business - high tech, telecommunications, and real estate - having worked for such companies as AT&T, Rockwell International, Digital Equipment Corp., and managed people, projects, and budgets. I grew up in a highly competitive environment in NYC, where by age 25, I had completed a Master's Degree, a field artillery Army commitment, began my professional career, and our first child was born. I currently co-manage our County budget of just over \$101M. As your county commissioner seeking re-election, I offer the following - short list – of accomplishments.</p> <p>1. GROWTH In order to accommodate the (arguably) fastest growth rate in the nation, I tasked our Community Development planners to produce a working document for addressing the growth challenge. In October, 2020, they wrote, "An Overview of Growth Management Principles and Possible Applications," available on our county website. We are about to potentially embark on the acquisition of hundreds of acres of open space, as have been offered to us by concerned property owners.</p> <p>2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT As our cost of living continues to rise, we need to attract qualified labor to attract those leading edge industries that can offer higher wages. As such, I have successfully advocated for increased funding for our Economic Development Corp.- sustained for the past three years.</p> <p>3. EMPLOYEE RETENTION In order to improve employee retention, I advocated for the creation of a general pay plan (matrix) for ALL our employees. This provides forward visibility into an employee's movement though future wage increases.</p> <p>4. PUBLIC SAFETY In addition to the increase in law enforcement wages, I supported a new approach to the purchase of the sheriff's interceptor vehicles, where for the price of purchasing nine vehicles, we can lease-purchase 25 vehicles for the same annual cost for a three-year period, at the end of which, we purchase the vehicles for \$1 each. I have also championed more competitive wages</p>	<p>I have a lot of organizational and managerial experience. My business was built from scratch, with me taking the very first order to several years later taking 5,000 orders a month and managing just under 200 employees and full-time equivalent staff. It was a 24/7 operation. Even the software for my company was built from scratch with me designing the initial data tables. My experience is broad and deep.</p> <p>The county is growing like a weed and there is no vision among county leadership for the end result. We're also in a public safety staffing crises that has occurred under the watch of my opponent. That's unacceptable.</p> <p>It's time for competent people to step in and fix these issues while it's still cheap. The continued neglect of public safety, among other issues, could come back to haunt us with multi-milliondollar lawsuits or consent decrees if not corrected soon. This has been proven time and again in other communities.</p> <p>My desire to seek office occurred organically. I've never had ambition for it. I only wanted to help get a good person elected as Sheriff. This is how I became Sheriff Bob Norris' Campaign Manager.</p> <p>It was through our discussions of county problems, and my exposure to the issues discussed in the Optional Forms of Government Study Commission, did I realize how poorly managed our county government is. If we are going to have the high quality of life we want, then good people must get involved. This service is no different than my service in the military.</p>

	<p>for our public safety employees. Beginning in 2018, I championed efforts to increase law enforcement wages, when in 2019, and as a result of the first of more wage studies to come, I led efforts to provide competitive wage increases to our law enforcement and non-sworn public safety employees as well. Additionally, in order to increase employee retention, I succeeded in establishing a pay matrix for ALL employees.</p> <p>5. LAKE MANAGEMENT</p> <p>We participate in the Lake Management Plan as a member of the Basin Commission, created as a body of stakeholders to oversee ongoing Cd'A Lake nutrient and heavy metal tailings containment. As a result of my advocacy for, and approval of \$ 200K toward the National Academy of Sciences study, the Governor asked me to chair the CdA Lake Advisory Committee (CLAC), a team of stakeholders led by the DEQ to prioritize the allocation of \$2M for lakeside phosphorus reduction.</p> <p>For more information regarding my qualifications, please visit my website: www.chrisforkootenai.com.</p>	
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