

Watchmen Voter Guide for Coeur d'Alene City Council Seat #1
*** Click on each candidate's name to see their completed questionnaire ***

	Brian D. Winkler	Christie Wood
1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	My name is Brian Winkler, and I am running for Coeur d'Alene City Council Seat 1. During the Marine Corps and throughout my professional career, I have lived in multiple cities, many of which have fallen to the same patterns of crime, high density, and unreasonable COVID mandates. I moved to Coeur d'Alene in 2021 to get away from those patterns. I began to get involved in the local community through the Idaho Speaks podcast, where I interview local and state officials about the issues that affect CDA, Kootenai County, and Idaho. I learned that CDA is succumbing to the same forces as the other cities, and I am running for office to preserve CDA's small-town charm and respect for individual liberty.	Christie Wood CDA City Council Seat 1- Coeur d' Alene has been my home for decades. I spent a career here working as a police officer. My husband and I raised our son here, and own a home here. I am deeply invested in my community and have a great interest in ensuring it's a safe, beautiful, and enduring place for families to thrive in. Serving on Council is an honor, and I am grateful to represent our citizens.
2. How could our city be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.	First, we need to reduce our reliance on appointed boards and get back to more direct engagement with our elected officials. Many of the functions in our city government and appointed boards do not require 'experts'. Simplicity and caution are the best approach to city governance, and through good fortune we have a community equipped with an abundance of common sense. Let's use it. Second, plans for annexation and growth need to include opportunities to bring in high-value jobs and productivity. This is especially important as conflict is erupting across the globe, and supply chains that have been globalized over the last 50 years are becoming less reliable. We need to think about how our community can sustain itself during this period of uncertainty.	The City of Coeur d'Alene is operating very efficiently and provides a wide variety of services to our taxpayers. Since I have been on Council, I have worked hard to focus on priority spending on public safety. I worked as a police officer for the city for 26 years. I know what it takes to keep a city from becoming Seattle. Since being on council I have insisted on fully funding our police and fire departments. The city failed to do this for many years. Now that we are fully funding the PD it has resulted in a 64% reduction of crime. You do not see homeless camps in our city. There is no gang activity, no graffiti, and no excessive violent crime. People want to live here because we are a safe and beautiful city. The way to keep the freedoms we enjoy is to keep our city crime free. This is the number one way to improve the city and I will continue to insist upon it. The Council must also take strong stances against irresponsible growth and density. I have voted no on projects that had too much density proposed, and would have a negative impact on city resources, quality of life, and the surrounding neighborhood. Growth will continue to be an issue. I intend to be vocal and aggressive against irresponsible growth.
3. What are your views on the rapid growth of North Idaho?	Growth should never outpace infrastructure, and we should be prioritizing family formation. And rather than simply adding more housing, we should be thinking about industry where new residents will work. High value jobs and industry should be a priority in any planning process, especially during this time of economic uncertainty across the globe.	North Idaho is a beautiful place to live and there is no doubt people will continue to move here to experience our way of life. The City of Coeur d'Alene does not have any large open tracts of land for expansion. Developers will be attempting to create infill projects in some of our older, and more established neighborhoods with large acre lots. I have voted against these kinds of projects that are not compatible with existing neighborhoods and I will continue to do so. Quality of life for our residents should always be a consideration when a request comes before council for annexation or a proposed PUD.

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4. In your opinion what best serves the public, elected officials, or appointed officials?	We need to reduce our reliance on appointed officials, and elected officials need to be more engaged in planning processes. Appointed officials are more insulated from the voting public, and therefore not as responsive to the needs of the community. We need to stop being so dependent on ‘the experts’ and more reliant on our common sense.	Elected officials by nature of their position are more accountable to the public. However, not every city committee or board should be put out for election. Some of these committees are very small land meant to be staffed by citizen volunteers. I think you can accomplish good citizen representation by having a mixture. Not all elected officials have an expertise in certain areas. I have worked with elected officials that seem to have zero capacity to learn or follow policy or law. Our current Urban renewal board is comprised of very talented and good people, but the balance is more citizens than elected representation. I recently visited the city of Florence Oregon. I researched the city a bit before our trip. Their urban renewal board is comprised of the mayor, two city council members, one person nominated by the county commissioners, and 5 citizens at large. Special consideration for board member appointments is given to elected members of their ambulance district, highway district etc. resulting on more elected officials on the board. I think that makes good sense. I also believe all elected officials should be required to know the laws as they pertain to city operations.
5. What improvements should be made to the city councils’ role in the design and authorization of new developments?	My opinion is that the elected council does not play a serious role in the design of new developments. This needs to change. Designs are generated by appointed boards and government departments that are insulated from the voters, and thus not accountable. This current structure also reduces transparency into the planning process, so voters are constantly reacting to the looming threat that their neighborhoods will be transformed into something unknown and without their consent.	The Planning Department for the city works with established design standards. Same is true for any PUD request. The Council does not approve or disprove unless there is an appeal. The city is required by state law to have a comprehensive plan. The city updated the plan last year. It is a guideline, not law. The Council should exercise good sense and decision making with all annexation requests or zoning appeals and understand the comp plan is just a guide.
6. In your opinion, should any services currently provided by the city be cut, eliminated, or privatized?	There are certainly items in the budget that need to be cut, such as funding for smart cities. I am also in favor of examining opportunities for privatization at the city level. However, we need to be careful about privatization, as we have learned that private entities do not always have the best interest of the community. Any privatization effort would need to be carefully constructed so that critical services do not fall into the wrong hands.	Before I would agree to any privatized services, I would suggest a community wide survey for our constituents about city services. Currently CDA residents enjoy a rapid emergency response from our police and fire departments. Our water department provides good, clean water. Our wastewater department ensures all household waste is properly disposed of and does not impact our river or lake. Residents enjoy weekly garbage pick-up, street maintenance, and snow plowing. The Council continues to authorize leaf pick-up in the fall. Our parks are beautifully maintained and provide a large amount of open, public space including waterfront access for our citizens. Our taxes are low compared to other cities and the services are good. I am proud of our employees and their dedication to the public.

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7. Do you believe access to city managed water and sewer should be increased to rural communities and why?	I am generally in favor of assisting our rural communities who produce food for our community. We are currently experiencing the failure of centralized systems and globalization, and it will be important to bring supply chains into the region so we are less dependent on hostile foreign nations and corrupt corporations. Food is a basic necessity of life, and we should be supporting our local food producers.	Not without the area being identified as a city area of impact or through an annexation process.
8. How do you plan on keeping a healthy reserve fund without increase taxes?	In government, keep it simple. We should focus on the basics of city government: supporting our police, firefighters, and other basic city services. We should not be paying consultants to implement 'smart cities', which is currently happening in the CDA city government. Government does not need to be on the cutting edge of technological adoption. Slow and steady is the best approach for city government.	The city maintains a healthy reserve fund. We are in process of raising our impact fees in order for growth to pay for itself. We will continue discussions with our legislators to help them understand the impact of some of their decisions on cities and their constituents. It's imperative CDA be allowed to charge a "Resort fee" to visitors that will help pay for their use of emergency services, and parks etc.
9. What is your opinion of the increased push for affordable housing?	We should be expanding single-family housing and prioritize family formation. High density housing leads to traffic, crime, and stretched infrastructure; and it almost never leads to actual affordable housing. It also undermines the natural character of communities, which we want to preserve in CDA.	I understand the housing shortage for workers is at a critical stage. We are unable to attract police officers, firefighter, street maintenance workers etc. for open positions due to unaffordable housing options. At the same time, I do not see a path for city government to fund housing. It's simply not our role. It's possible we can be creative with tax incentives for the development of work force housing. I am willing to listen to that discussion.
10. All too often local residents feel that their public comment is not taken into consideration when decisions are made that directly affect their daily lives and their property value. What would you suggest so that the public's best interests become a priority over builders and developers?	Elected officials need to be more involved in the planning and zoning process. They currently serve as a rubber stamp that approves the plans of appointed boards and city planning departments. It reflects a larger problem in government in which legislators at all levels are not actually legislating; rather they serve as 'conveyor belts' that rubber stamp the products of special interests.	Our Council is united in our respect for public comment at our meetings. I listen intently and take all the information into consideration. On many occasions the council has responded immediately to the concerns expressed during public comment.
11. What is your opinion of "Smart Cities" and how they apply to North Idaho?	I believe that we need to resist the pressure to become a 'smart city'. Not only is there evidence that cellular networking technology is harmful to public health, but it comes with surveillance requirements that threaten the privacy of our community. Data on citizens are collected and sent to centralized computer systems, which are difficult to understand and are controlled by unknown agencies.	I am not in favor of Smart Cities. People live in CDA and Kootenai County because we love a rural community. I have zero interest in, nor would I provide support for a Smart City.

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12. Should the concept of “equitable outcome” be implemented as a part of the city council’s decision-making process? Why or why not?	No. Collectivism leads to poverty and misery, as the 20th century has demonstrated. Income should be based on merit and productivity, and determined by market forces. Income that is decided at the whims of bureaucrats will only lead to cronyism and incentives that don’t encourage productivity.	The City Council makes decisions based on Idaho code and city ordinances. We are not a private corporation that implements any kind of ideology.
13. Is there anything in your personal, business, or career life that would be a conflict of interest in your ability to serve the people of this city?	For about the last decade, I have been a technology professional for IBM and AWS. This experience has given me a perspective about economic centralization, a perspective which I have described in this questionnaire. I understand that this experience may be perceived as a conflict. However, I am currently in discussions with my current employer about finalizing my separation with the company. I will have more information about this in the next few weeks.	No conflicts of interest. No criminal background.
14. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position?	I was an officer in the Marine Corps where I managed a \$35M annual budget through cycles of austerity at Marine Special Operations Command. I also have close to a decade of experience in business and technology – at IBM and AWS – in which I have worked deeply in multiple industries such as energy and utilities, global finance, and media and entertainment. My experience centered around implementing technology solutions that make businesses run more efficiently, and within budgetary constraints. I am also a volunteer host on Idaho Speaks, a conservative podcast in which I interview state and local leaders to discuss the issues of CDA and Kootenai County. You can find my interviews with leaders such as Sheriff Norris; Commissioner Mattare; Congressman Fulcher; and State Reps Alfieri, Price, and Barbieri.	I have 30 years of elected public office experience. I served 8 years on the CDA School Board, 18 years as a trustee on the NIC Board, and 4 years on the CDA City Council. I am well vested in public policy, public budget and laws pertaining to public officials and public entities. I have a track record of listening to constituents and putting the needs of taxpayers first.