



2022 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Mark Cherney

Email: MarkCherney4GNFD@gmail.com

Website: votemarkcherney.com

Phone: (239) 398-0860

Date: 09/14/2022

1. About you:

- a. How old are you? **61**
- b. In what part of Collier County do you live? **Old East Naples Fire District Seat Area**
- c. How long have you lived in Collier County, and where were you living previously?
50 years in Collier County – Previously Sarasota – Florida Native
- d. What is your educational background and past work experiences?
**Bachelor Degree in Aeronautical Science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Master's Degree in Administration majoring in Public Administration from Central Michigan University
Retired from Collier County Sheriff's Office at the rank of Captain following 30 years of service, and have continued my public service by volunteering as a non-paid Reserve Deputy Sheriff for the past six years. Currently own and operate a contract pilot and aircraft management company.**
- e. What qualifies you for this job?
I have a strong educational background and an even stronger public service experience background through my work at the Collier County Sheriff's Office where I was directly responsible for Aviation and Marine operations and overseeing a multi-million-dollar budget. Some of my responsibilities included management of multiple aircraft, aircrews, marine vessels and vessel operators. Throughout my career I served on multiple agency committees inclusive of chairing the Member Benefits Committee, and the Education Committee.

2. Why are you running for this position?

The Greater Naples Fire District (GNFD) is currently on the verge of a full-scale tax and finance emergency! District infrastructure has been permitted to deteriorate to the point where as much as \$40M may be needed to recover. There are financial gaps that are not adequately being addressed. Growth is not currently paying for growth as there has been a failure to adequately adjust impact fees. We need Fire Commissioners that are fiscally responsible, have extensive public safety experience, are situationally aware, and also understand the need to keep pace with growth! We need Fire

Commissioners who are intellectually energized to think outside the box to find ways to help administrative leadership achieve their operational goals!

3. What are three things you want to accomplish if you are elected?
- 1. Balance the budget so GNFD is not constantly working with a budget deficit.**
 - 2. Increase impact fees to make growth pay for growth.**
 - 3. Repair/replace and maintain infrastructure protecting the taxpayer's investment and providing firefighters with safe work and living environment.**
4. Name one past policy decision of the board you are running for that you disagree with that you would like to change if elected. Why?

The incumbent board is researching the issuance of up to a \$40M municipal bond, (or possibly a commercial bank loan) to pay for infrastructure, yet have no identified revenue stream identified to make repayment of the borrowed monies. When questioned in an open board meeting, an unnamed commissioner simply replied, "we can find \$1.5M a year in the operating budget that can be reallocated to make the payment." If true, why are they ending fiscal year 2022 with a \$2.4M deficit and estimating a \$2.4M deficit for next year as well? This in a year where the board voted against putting a referendum to the voters in November for development of a revenue stream that actually had a sunset provision attached.

5. What is the most important thing voters should know about the issues at stake in this election, before making their decision about who to vote for?

The current GNFD board is running on autopilot and has been stagnant for a long period of time. There remains district bias that is still present eight years later following the merger of East Naples and Golden Gate Fire Districts making the board dysfunctional. Our firefighters deserve a board that is going to stand behind and support them with equipment and infrastructure to provide our citizenry with the emergency services required to protect their lives.

Please email your responses to Sandy Parker, sandy@sparkers-soapbox.com , no later than September 16, 2022.

Thank you!