



2024 GNFRD Candidate Questionnaire
Revised 7/25/24

Candidate Name: Russell Tuff
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Phone: 239-353-1687
Date: _____

1. About you:

- a. How old are you? 65

- b. How long have you lived in Collier County, and where were you living previously?
 - a. Moved to Collier County in 1989. Born in Hayes Kansas, raised in Blackduck, Minnesota, Lived in Jamestown, North Dakota 6 years and Blue Earth Minnesota 4 years.
- c. What is your educational background and past work experience?
 - a. BA - Business Administration University of Jamestown
 - b. BA - History/Political Science University of Jamestown
 - c. Minor – Religion University of Jamestown
 - d. EFM (Education for Ministry) Degree – School of Theology, Sewanee Tennessee.

I've been highly engaged in community as follows:

Community Involvement

• **Leadership Roles**

- President, The Right Men's Club
- President, Collier County Republican Men's Club
- Chairman, Collier County Republican Executive Committee
- Secretary, PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) Sunshine District
- National Assembly Delegate, PRSA International
- President, Gulf Coast Chapter of Public Relations Society of America
- President, Golden Gate Area Civic Association
- President, Golden Gate Chamber of Commerce
- Founding President, Golden Gate Visitor Center

• **Committee Memberships**

- Metropolitan Planning Organization Citizens Advisory Council
- Naples Airport Authority Noise Compatibility Committee
- Collier County Planning Commissioner
- Hodges University Digital Media and Communications Advisory Board
- Director, Naples Area Chamber of Commerce
- Golden Gate Master Plan Committee

- Collier County Republican Executive Committee
- Charter Member, Naples Area Tourism Board
- Charter Member, Collier County Tourism Alliance
- Collier County Economic Advisory Council
- Board of Directors, Naplescape
- **Community Programs**
 - Leadership Collier, 1994
 - Leadership Institute – Inaugural Class
 - Everglades Chamber of Commerce
 - Sertoma, Blue Earth, MN
 - Jaycees, Jamestown, ND, Blue Earth, MN
 - Church Youth Group Leader – Trinity Lutheran Church, Jamestown, ND
 - Church Council Member – Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church, Naples, FL
 - Vestry Member – Trinity by the Cove Episcopal Church, Naples, FL
 - Cursillo Secretariat, Southwest Florida
 - Golden Gate Cub Scout Den Leader
 - Naples Football League Coach
 - Baseball/T-Ball Coach

My extensive experience in community leadership and involvement demonstrates my commitment to improving public safety and overall quality of life in our community.

My work career has been composed of the following:

- Newspaper delivery boy
- Press operator
- Advertising sales
- Cook at Hardees Restaurant
- Night Auditor
- Zales Jewelry Assistant Manager
- Radio Advertising Sales Representative
- Financial Planner with IDS/American Express
- Sales Manager of News business
- Publisher of News Business
- Executive Editor of Media Company
- Public Relations Firm

d. What qualifies you for this job?

- a. I have worked on the consolidation effort for years and that finally occurred, now we need to finish the job.

2. Why are you running for this position?

- We need to rethink how we do emergency service. 85% of fire department calls are for medical purposes, yet we send large expensive vehicles to medical calls, and send two vehicles to each call. That practice needs to change.

- We don't need to send a three-man team to a Senior living community to pick up a resident who has fallen.
 - We have done a very poor job of prioritizing capital equipment, from planning or replacing/repairing of aging vehicles and structures. There has been no plan, and sometimes cool new toys get purchased before taking care of what should have been used for repair and replacement.
 - If a company/business/government entity can't get by with back to back 19% and 16% revenue increases and can't make ends meet. Then some changes need to be made on direction.
3. Do you support or oppose the proposal to increase the authorized millage rate from 1.5 mills up to 2.0 mills for an 8-year period, with such revenues held in a capital improvement account? Why or why not?
- I oppose the Millage increase. We are increasing taxes to try to fix an old way of doing business to fit in a new way of doing business that has larger service areas, more complicated methods of delivering emergency services, and equipment needs (ladder trucks and fire apparatus) that are overkill for most of the services needed. The old way won't work for the future of Emergency services in Collier County. We are operating the Greater Naples Fire districts with systems in place that were adequate 10 to 20 years ago.
4. Do you support further consolidation of Collier County's fire districts? If so, why, when, and how? If not, why not?
- I think the first fix is to merge the EMS with fire and take steps to eventually merge the independent districts. One doesn't require legislative action, and a vote from the separate districts. The other does and will take more political maneuvering to accomplish. EMS is a money losing system, so funds would need to be received from the County to the Fire District to supplement the losses that would occur. West Collier County collections for ambulance service are collected at a much higher rate the Eastern Collier County. Those losses need to be accounted for.
5. What is the most important thing voters should know about you and/or the issues at stake in this election before making their decision about who to vote for?
- I would not have put the tax increase on the ballot. Do the taxpayers want to continue to fund a disjointed emergency service system in Collier County or adapt to better and more efficient methods of providing top level service in a cost effective manner. I've been working on consolidating services for around 15 years. Progress has been slow, but the end is in sight.

Please email your responses to Sandy Parker, sandy@sparkers-soapbox.com , no later than August 15. Thank you.