

***Democrats of Napa Valley
Candidate Questionnaire
Candidate for City Council***

DEADLINE FOR RETURN TO DEMOCRATS OF NAPA VALLEY: FRIDAY, AUGUST 9

Candidate's Name: Michelle Deasy
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Area/District: St. Helena
Party Affiliation: Democratic Party

Occupation: Executive Director
Campaign Manager: n/a; Self

Employer: QA Commons
Contact #: n/a

If an Incumbent, please provide the year your original term of office began:

Candidate Specific Questions

- 1. Provide a bio of your relevant experience/background for this office. (200 words maximum)**

I am the Executive Director of QA Commons, a national nonprofit dedicated to preparing learners for workforce changes and improving economic/social mobility by focusing on "employability" in colleges, universities, workforce entities, and carceral institutions. My role involves managing daily operations, overseeing projects and staffing, project development, fundraising, and working with the Board of Directors to ensure the mission and goals are achieved.

As a consultant, I have served as a researcher on economic development and labor market initiatives in rural areas of Oregon and Virginia and have co-written winning grants awarded by the Department of Labor and Environmental Protection Agency. Additionally, I have served on the boards of several education-focused nonprofit organizations over the years. Before moving into a nonprofit, I spent 15+ years in the corporate realm, working at Bank of America, Atlas Capital Advisors, and Oracle Corporation.

I hold a Master's degree in Demography from UC Berkeley and a Bachelor's degree in Rural Sociology from Cornell University. My professional development activities include earning a Design Futures Certificate from the Institute for the Future.

These experiences have equipped me with the skills to understand diverse perspectives, read financial statements, think strategically about complex issues, and drive impactful change.

- 2. List your key supporters, including campaign volunteers and hired consultants, and endorsements.**

This campaign prioritizes direct, personal engagement with residents, emphasizing face-to-face conversations and active listening over traditional strategies like hiring consultants or seeking high-profile endorsements. The focus is on building genuine connections within the community by getting out and talking to people where they are (bocce league, Farmer's Market, soccer leagues, coffee shop, etc.) and providing accessible platforms, such as an online "tell us what you think" portal, where constituents can easily share their thoughts and ideas. This approach ensures that the campaign remains closely aligned with the needs and desires of the community.

3. Where do you expect to receive your main financial commitments?

I expect to receive my main financial commitments through small donations from local residents. I value grassroots support and believe that even modest contributions can make a significant impact. While I do not plan on a large-scale fundraising campaign or significant spending, I am committed to running a focused and efficient campaign that prioritizes community engagement and transparency.

4. What distinguishes your candidacy and campaign from the other candidates for this office?

With a robust blend of academic, corporate, nonprofit, and community leadership experience, I am a well-rounded candidate who brings a balanced perspective. I bring a blend of financial expertise, social awareness, and a strong connection to the community, with an eye toward policymaking that is both effective and inclusive.

Issues: (100 words maximum per question)

5. What do you see as the major issues and their possible solutions in this campaign?

St. Helena must address urgent issues like a water shortage and implement a sustainable financial plan. As the world and economy evolve, we must carefully navigate these changes, preserving our town's unique character while making thoughtful improvements that enhance our community's quality of life.

Possible solutions could *include*:

1. Rural economic development grants that leverage creative intergovernmental and public-private partnerships that seek to solve water issues (via recycling/reuse and groundwater management) while also creating new jobs and training residents to fill them.
2. Tightening city spending and ensuring staff time is used effectively and efficiently.

6. Do you believe in and would you work to protect a woman's right to choose and to have control over her own body? X Yes ___No

Is it easy enough for a woman in Napa County to access healthcare to have an abortion?

Access to healthcare, including abortion services, is essential for protecting women's health, ensuring reproductive rights, reducing poverty, and promoting public health. In Napa County, access to abortion services can be challenging for some women due to limited facilities that provide abortion services, financial barriers, and lack of awareness of support services and how to access them.

**7. Is the City doing most everything it can to ensure that residents feel safe? ___Yes X No
If no, what 1-2 ideas do you think should be considered?**

The City of St. Helena and its police department work diligently to ensure residents feel safe, recognizing there is always room for improvement. Despite the city's low crime rate, safety encompasses more than just protection from physical assault.

Currently, the city's communication efforts are predominantly one-way, focusing on informing residents rather than soliciting their feedback. FlashVote, which has less than 350 participants, could be better utilized. It's crucial to engage residents on their safety concerns using a holistic approach that includes physical, environmental, social, and psychological well-being, addressing protection from crime, pollution, natural disasters, and more.

8. The number of children enrolled in school in Napa County continues to decline. What are 2-3 solutions to at least slow or stop this decline?

St. Helena is a fantastic place for families to live – with an excellent school district. Indeed, declining public school enrollment is an issue for the city. Key solutions for attracting families with school-age children could be:

- 1) Development of affordable housing.
- 2) A more expansive approach to economic development. I envision St. Helena flourishing with a small but vibrant innovation hub where remote workers and local entrepreneurs can prosper while seamlessly integrating into the winemaking and agricultural culture. Successful implementation of such a plan could generate well-paying jobs for residents and more potential for upward mobility for the younger generation.

9. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Since moving to St. Helena with my family in 2019, I have grown to love the town. I have enjoyed volunteering as a youth sports coach for the Napa Valley Waves and Napa United. I served four years on the St. Helena Parks & Recreation Commission and am currently on the Library Board. I play in the town bocce league and like to hang out at the local coffee roastery.

If elected, I commit to listening, reading, studying, and asking thoughtful questions. I am willing to make difficult choices.

I appreciate the consideration of Napa Valley Democrats for endorsement.

Michelle Deasy
Michelle Deasy (Aug 9, 2024 16:29 PDT)

Signature

August 9, 2024

Date