

CANDIDATE FORUM ON CULTURE

As a service to any interested person, individual emails were sent to each Joplin City Council Candidate and each Joplin School Board Candidate on February 8, 2016. Each email contained an opening statement and four questions tailored to their respective candidacy for either the City Council or the School Board.

Connect2Culture, a 501(c)(3) organization, is providing these responses, **exactly as received**, in full compliance with IRS regulations as stated hereafter. All responses are grouped according to the office and term being sought and in date order of their receipt.

The Restriction of Political Campaign Intervention by Section 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organizations

Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. Contributions to political campaign funds or public statements of position (verbal or written) made on behalf of the organization in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office clearly violate the prohibition against political campaign activity. Violating this prohibition may result in denial or revocation of tax-exempt status and the imposition of certain excise taxes.

Certain activities or expenditures may not be prohibited depending on the facts and circumstances. For example, certain voter education activities (including presenting public forums and publishing voter education guides) conducted in a non-partisan manner do not constitute prohibited political campaign activity. In addition, other activities intended to encourage people to participate in the electoral process, such as voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives, would not be prohibited political campaign activity if conducted in a non-partisan manner.

On the other hand, voter education or registration activities with evidence of bias that (a) would favor one candidate over another; (b) oppose a candidate in some manner; or (c) have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates, will constitute prohibited participation or intervention.

Link: [https://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/The-Restriction-of-Political-Campaign-Intervention-by-Section-501\(c\)\(3\)-Tax-Exempt-Organizations](https://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/The-Restriction-of-Political-Campaign-Intervention-by-Section-501(c)(3)-Tax-Exempt-Organizations)

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Again, this information is provided for all interested parties and voters regarding the upcoming April 5, 2016 Joplin City Council and Joplin School Board election. Connect2Culture sincerely appreciates all candidates who took the time to provide responses.

Letter to City Council Candidates:

I am writing to you in my role as President and CFO of Connect2Culture. We view the upcoming April election to be crucial to Joplin's future and to our ongoing efforts of growing the cultural offerings for our City and its citizens.

The views of all candidates, whether opposed or unopposed, are extremely important to the Board of Connect2Culture and the constituency of those who support our efforts and pay attention to our various forms of communication. As a 501c3, Connect2Culture cannot and will not endorse any one candidate over another.

Therefore, we request a written response from all Council Candidates to the following questions. Please remit those responses directly back to me and copy our Community Arts Director, Emily Frankoski, who is copied on this email by March 7, 2016.

1. What is your opinion of the value of performance and visual arts as a quality of life element for Joplin citizens and as an economic development impact for Joplin businesses and the City of Joplin? Please elaborate/explain.
2. Do you support the announced efforts of Connect2Culture regarding the establishment of an Arts, Entertainment, Education, and Historic District from 7th to 10th Streets from Joplin to Wall Avenues? If yes, why? If not, why not? Please elaborate/explain.
3. Please elaborate on your vision for the present Memorial Hall. What is your platform statement regarding Memorial Hall?
4. What other open-end comments regarding cultural arts in Joplin would you like to make?

Thank you for your desire to serve our community and its citizens. We look forward to receipt of your reply. If you would like to meet with me personally to garner additional information that would potentially assist in your response, please reply to this email and we'll coordinate a date and time.

Sincerely,
Clifford E. Wert
Connect2Culture
President/CFO

General Four-Year Term

Bill Goodwin *received February 12, 2016*

I would love to say that I am an expert with respect to the arts so that I could give you an intelligent, informed, answer to your questions, unfortunately I am not. My opinion is that all cultural events play an invaluable role in the formation of who we are as a society, or in this case a community. What we do, who we are, the things we enjoy, are all part of the legacy that we leave for the next generation. The more expansive we are with respect to our thoughts, actions, and culture, the more enlightened the future is for all.

Without knowing specific plans for your future projects it is hard for me as an outsider to determine what the economic opportunities are. In general, I am certainly in favor of any good economic driver, especially if it has cultural or entertainment value. Anything that draws people to Joplin is undoubtedly going to have a positive effect on the economy.

Again, in order to have an informed discussion on the topic I would need more information, that being said, on the surface it sounds like a very positive step forward for the community. If the opportunity exists to establish such a development within that area, with the support of the community, I can see no negatives at this time. If it is to be a privately funded project that would enhance support, if it is privately and publically funded, or publically funded, it would require additional understanding on my part to commit my full support.

I am a believer in preserving history, when and where possible. I do not know the structural condition of Memorial Hall, or the extent that it is currently being used. If the hall is not going to be used because of deterioration, or it is not feasible to try and restore it, I would support your idea of removing the memorial plaques from the building and placing them in a new facility to honor those events and persons involved. That being on the condition that great care would be taken to ensure no damage was done to the plaques, and that they are properly honored in a new facility.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions.

Bill

General Four-Year Term

Harvey Hutchinson *received February 19, 2016*

1) Having served a term and a half on the Parks & Rec Board I am very familiar with quality of life. Our number one challenge is business recruitment. We do not need to lose a company relocation because the CEO's wife is concerned about going 150 miles to KC or 100 to Tulsa to find legitimate culture. Further,, our own youth need these opportunities, and it has to be here for that reason in itself. And when we do have world class culture events we can draw tourists from miles around; perhaps from far enough that they would stay in our hotels, buy gasoline, eat in our restaurants and all other hospitality could be sold to these visitors.

2) Yes by all means. the whole area needs cleaning up; and I cannot think of a better way than a culture district. AS you know I ran last time railing against moving the library, a very important public building that should be part of your scheme(but we lost that one)

3) The walk through study by architects and engineers did not prove promising. It is currently costing the city \$200,000 to operate. The Parks and Rec department works really hard to book it, but it is still woefully lacking. It may well be a safety hazard. It should be dismantled and as much as possible (such as seating) saved and then imploded. The Veteran's plaques should be turned over to the Museum for the establishment of a Joplin Veterans permanent exhibit..

4) it is an admirable group and an even more admirable endeavor When on the council I intend to help as much as possible withing fiscal constraints. Our community needs this, and the regards will be worthwhile.

Harvey Hutchinson
Candidate for Joplin City Council

General Four-Year Term

Gregory Taylor Brown *received February 21, 2016*

1. First, any city worth its weight creates a culture for the arts to thrive. Before I moved to Joplin, I was a musician and storyteller. I was able to, firsthand, play a part in the arts culture of Knoxville, TN. Art creates the heartbeat for a city.

C2C is a very worthwhile addition to Joplin. Two words: foot traffic. I would love to see Connect2Culture integrating with local businesses to create incentive for their attendees to visit other businesses. I love taking visitors of CIY out and showing all that Joplin has to offer. C2C helps make that a reality. Thank you so much for all you do!

2. I'm very intrigued by this idea. I love that the people of Joplin are dreaming big and pushing us to become greater. I have some questions about the implementation of this idea and how it will be maintained. However, I'm still very excited about its potential.

3. Memorial Hall clearly needs attention. If the city is to continue running the facility as a multi-use venue, investment needs to be made by the city. If the city wants to sell the facility, to another entity willing to run it, then that process should be open to bids.

4. We need Connect to Culture. I want to thank the men and women who are part of it for all they bring to our city. What is a city if it is not one filled with a vibrant culture? It is the very essence of what it means to be a community.

General Four-Year Term

Jim West received March 1, 2016

Hello Clifford, here are my four answers in order to this questionnaire to sent.

1. I total support the performance and visual arts as a good life elements for all the Joplin citizens, it has been and well continued to b good for the Joplin Business, and the City.
2. Yes I support the efforts by the connect2culture plan for establishment of an art, entertainment center, if they raise the funds for this large under taken project, I well support them all the way.
3. My view on the memorial Hall, is something that the City Council need to study carefully, and fine the best resolution for it, it going to take funds and a good plan.
4. I think the Cultural arts in Joplin is good, when the Thursday art walk started, I was on the City Council, and it has been a hit for all the downtown business, and all citizens here, and it has draws many citizens for the immediate four state area to Joplin, a win win.

jim west

General Four-Year Term

David Pryor *received March 7, 2016*

Thank you for your questions regarding cultural arts in Joplin.

I believe quality of life is a very important part of a community today and as the community grows. Visual and performing arts are vital to the citizens of Joplin. The opportunity for citizens to enjoy the arts in Joplin rather than having to leave and travel to larger cities adds to economic growth in Joplin.

I support efforts of Connect2Culture to establish a district of culture. Citizens of Joplin and visitors would be drawn to the area which would support and enhance the community.

Memorial Hall, it is a great building in the city that needs to continue to be used. I would like to see Memorial Hall continue to be used as an event venue whether that means a location for cultural arts or other events brought to the city.

I have enjoyed the arts in Joplin as I have grown up from attending plays at Joplin Little Theater to listening to performances by ProMusica. Seeing art exhibits at Spiva Center for the Arts has always been enjoyable for me. I believe that there is opportunity to grow and enhance cultural arts in the city.

Again, thank you for your questions. If I you any further questions please let me know.

Thank you,
David Pryor

General Two-Year Term

No response to the four specific questions received from Dan McCreary

Zone II Four-Year Term

No response to the four specific questions received from Melodee Colbert-Kean

Letter to Joplin School Board Candidates:

I am writing to you in my role as President and CFO of Connect2Culture. We view the upcoming April election to be crucial to Joplin's future and to our ongoing efforts of growing the cultural offerings for our City and its citizens, especially our succeeding generations represented by our children and students.

The views of all candidates are extremely important to the Board of Connect2Culture and the constituency of those who support our efforts and pay attention to our various forms of communication. As a 501c3, Connect2Culture cannot and will not endorse any one candidate over another.

Therefore, we request your written response to the following questions. Please remit those responses directly back to me and copy our Community Arts Director, Emily Frankoski, who is copied on this email by March 7, 2016.

1. State your vision for student participation through the Joplin Schools in the varied aspects of cultural arts in Joplin.
2. Are you supportive of the School-Community Partnership proposed by Connect2Culture at the November 2014 School Board meeting? If yes, why? If no, why not? Please explain/elaborate.
3. How do you see the Joplin Schools partnering with Connect2Culture's efforts to establish an Arts, Entertainment, Education, and Historic District from 7th to 10th Streets from Joplin to Wall Avenues?
4. What other open-end comments regarding cultural arts in Joplin would you like to make?

Thank you for your desire to serve our community and its students. We look forward to receipt of your reply. If you would like to meet with me personally to garner additional information that would potentially assist in your response, please reply to this email and we'll coordinate a date and time.

Sincerely,
Clifford Wert
Connect2Culture
President/CFO

Three-Year Term

Sharrock Dermott received February 8, 2016

I agree that the April election is crucial to Joplin's future. That is one reason I decided to run for a seat on the Joplin School Board. I am familiar with Connect2Culture and support its efforts to grow the cultural offerings for our City and all its citizens.

1. I believe that cultural arts significantly enhance our human experience. My vision for Joplin students is that they be exposed to a variety of arts, and have opportunities within our community to pursue, practice and grow whatever talents move them. I know that Joplin schools offer classes and school activities in art, music and drama, and recognize many students would benefit from additional opportunities to pursue their interests in the arts.
2. It is my understanding that the Joplin School Board unanimously voted at the November 2014 School Board meeting to explore a collaborative School-Community Partnership regarding a Performing Arts Center to be completed at Joplin High School in spring of 2015. At that meeting, Connect2Culture proposed to provide private financial support for additions – such as upgrades to the audio-visual system and community spaces - to the JHS Performing Arts Center with the belief that the collaborative venue would enhance the cultural offerings at the Performing Arts Center.
3. Since November 2014, I believe that the community focus for a Performing Arts Center has moved to the Historic District from 7th to 10th Streets and from Joplin to Wall Avenues. I hope that the change in location would have no impact upon Joplin School Board support of the project. The School-Community Partnership is clearly a win-win for all interested parties.
4. I see the Joplin Schools partnering with Connect2Culture's efforts to establish an Arts, Entertainment, Education, and Historic District from 7th to 10th Streets and from Joplin to Wall Avenues as being a fantastic opportunity. The Performing Arts Center will present a wonderful venue for Joplin students of all ages to present their art. Adults whose personal interests in arts may have passed may be introduced/re-introduced to arts through their children, grandchildren, etc. I also believe that the Performing Arts Center will also enhance the area chosen for its construction – physically, socially and economically.
5. It is terrific that Connect2Culture is seeking to advance the common goals of existing entities that enthusiastically explore arts in Joplin.

Thank you both for your service to our community.

Best regards,
Sharrock

Three-Year Term

Mary Gaarder received February 12, 2016

1. Education is about broadening horizons and opening doors. Ideally Joplin students should have opportunities to learn from and be a part of the arts community in Joplin. It's wonderful when students take field trips to Spiva, the Joplin Museum, Pro Musica concerts, and Wildcat Glades. Art Feeds has been a welcome addition to the curriculum. Real world problems and activities are a great way to motivate students, so besides being just an audience it would be great to get our kids participating more fully in the arts. For instance if we had a performing arts center maybe they could interact with the actors in a drama class, and even take small parts in productions. Could their work be displayed at a special event at Spiva? Could a choral group dress in Charles Dickens type costumes and sing at the Dickensfest in Murphysburg? What about a "*plein air*" class at Wildcats? If Joplin students are exposed to and participate in the arts as young people they will help to sustain that community as adults.
2. Connect2Culture made a presentation to the Board of Education in November of 2014. I think the board was wise to unanimously agree to explore the possibility of adding to the performing arts center at the high school. However I think C2C's more recent proposal to expand Memorial Hall is a better solution for a performing arts center in Joplin. Expanding Memorial Hall would provide more options for performing and visual arts venues as well as offer classrooms for more participation by our students.
3. The more the schools and C2C collaborate the better off our community will be. To help make the Arts, Entertainment, Education and Historic District between 7th and 10th Streets, Wall and Joplin Streets become a reality the school board should help in any way they can. Surely the parking lots the school district owns could be used by arts patrons for events that occurred after school hours. Perhaps some fundraising could be done by Joplin students by asking for donations at some of their art performances.
4. A vibrant arts community immeasurably enhances the quality of life in a town. Even those who rarely attend a cultural event benefit from the increased economic activity that is generated. A city that promotes education, the arts, history and nature is a city on the upswing. I fully support C2C's efforts in those areas and applaud them for what they have already accomplished. C2C's collaborative work with the school district is a win-win for everyone in our community.

Mary Gaarder
February 2016

Three-Year Term

Jennifer Martucci *received March 6, 2016*

Dear Mr Wert, I have looked over your request and feel I can probably address all of your questions with one response. If your organization can bring a partnership opportunity for the school district that will directly impact academic achievement in the core subjects (Math, English, Science, History), then I would be willing to listen to the proposal. If your organization is interested in what the District can do to improve your standing as a non-profit organization, then I don't see the benefit to the district. In recent years, our district mission of educating our students and preparing them for college has been muddied by some partnerships, where we have lost sight of that mission. Since the tornado, we have rebuilt our school buildings, but the district did a poor job of rebuilding the culture of our schools, and I see that as a priority during the three year term I am seeking on the Board.

If you have any other questions of me as a candidate, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you, Jennifer Martucci

Three-Year Term

Melissa Rodgers *received March 7, 2016*

Melissa Rodgers

Response to Connect2Culture email

1. Cultural arts include music, art, drama, and dance. The cultural arts hold high value in educational learning as they allow teaching and development of the mind, regardless of age, as well as being the representation of values as a community. Because of this I believe that it is important to include cultural arts in our children's education. The expression they are allowed to take part in will help them to be well-rounded individuals. They receive this by using various tools including visual art, music development, storytelling/drama/theater, and dance.
2. I did view the above referenced meeting, but there was not enough information presented in order to make full assessment of this question.
3. As a group, the Board would need to assess if/how it could partner in this effort. Again, I do not have enough information to fully assess this question. The board would need to be presented with Connect2Culture's partnership proposal.
4. Cultural arts have high value in my opinion. Joplin has many talented individuals within the cultural arts area. Allowing them to showcase their talent speaks hugely for those individuals, who are expressing themselves through their art, whether that be art, music, theater, or dance.

Two-Year Term

Lori Musser received March 4, 2016

1. Cultural arts has always been a positive influence for our students and it promotes and enhances their learning. It promotes creativity, appreciation, problem-solving, higher order thinking skills and lifelong learning. It offers many benefits and is fun for our students and we need to continue offering opportunities for our students to experience the arts. Community organizations such as Pro Musica, Art Feeds, Spiva Center for the Arts and the MSSU Theatre Department have offered countless opportunities for our students to experience and enjoy the arts. Some of Joplin's students would never get the opportunity to experience art and culture if it weren't for these great organizations. These experiences need to continue as well as the comprehensive music and arts curriculum that is in place within our schools.
2. I am supportive of exploring the possibility of a School-Community Partnership. I cannot say that I am supportive of the project that was presented without additional information. I have a lot of questions about the project and further exploration would most certainly provide me with the additional information that I would need to determine my stance. I am supportive of School-Community Partnerships, in general, but would want to know more about what kind of concessions would be provided and other issues. How would funding be handled? Would there be an endowment? Would the name of the building change? Who would maintain the building or pay for repairs when needed? Would a rental fee be paid by community organizations?

I would definitely want to see forums held so that stakeholders, including students, would have the opportunity to provide input and discuss the positives and negatives of this project.
3. I do not have a clear answer or opinion on this at this time. I would definitely want to have a lot of input from stakeholders in order to brainstorm and explore options. I would also like to see a feasibility study conducted for this concept.
4. I appreciate all of the hard work of Connect2Culture and the other organizations in Joplin that are currently providing cultural arts experiences for our community. I do like the collaboration aspect of school and community partnerships. It is imperative that we always work together to benefit the children of Joplin. Any support that I would provide, for any project, would be based solely on what is best for our students.

Two-Year Term

Joseph Brown received March 9, 2016

Sorry for missing your deadline (work has been keeping me busy).

1. I would love to see increased participation of Joplin students in the cultural arts and connections/partnerships with organizations outside the school district are an excellent way of promoting, propelling, and expanding the students and our community.
2. Yes, I am supportive of what I understand. I would like more information on the subject, but feel it would be an excellent use of school district, community and taxpayer resources.
3. I would see it as expanding further to encompass Memorial Education Center and, if possible, the former Carnegie Library. This area of Joplin should be the heart of our city and the historical significance of the area and structures in the vicinity need to be understood, developed and used. A partnership with the schools could involve clubs, organizations, individuals and formal segments (band, orchestra, JET14, graphic arts, etc.) to help develop and promote the area through workshops, concerts, exhibitions, etc.
4. I feel that the arts and exposure to them in Joplin has been lacking for a long time. Joplin used to be an entertainment center long before I was born and could be once again with the right mix of support. The children of the school district are a good resource for developing the arts as they develop artistically, but they haven't had much to look forward to in the way of progression beyond school in the cultural arts locally. Therefore, many inclined in the arts either leave, turn their passions into a hobby, or give up entirely.

Joseph W. "Joe" Brown

One-Year Term

No response to the four specific questions received from Chris Sloan
No response to the four specific questions received from Carlos Haley