

Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Alderperson Candidate Questionnaire

Please tell us about yourself.

Your Name: *

Justin Kirchen

Aldermanic District: *

13

Current Home Address: *

Rodney Ct

Email: *

[REDACTED]

Phone: *

[REDACTED]

Campaign website, if any:

justinkirchen.com

Social media (Twitter, Instagram, etc.) handles, if any:

Past education and work history (question optional; alternately you may send résumé to brett@madisonbiz.com)

I am originally from Waukesha where I attended South High School.

I received my Bachelors from Marquette University in Milwaukee. I completed my undergraduate in 3 years and graduated in 2011 with a degree in political science. I was also fortunate enough to attend Georgetown University for a semester through the Fund for American Studies Engalitcheff Institute on Comparative Political and Economic Systems.

From age 14 through college I owned and operated a lawn care and property maintenance company with my younger brother. At its peak we had 3 employees, serviced nearly 100 customers and had \$100k in annual revenue.

In 2014 I closed my lawn care business to pursue a career in financial consulting. Since 2016, I have worked at a local financial institution that services Credit Unions in multiple capacities. I hold my Series 7 and 66 and life and health insurance licenses.

I currently own and maintain two rental income properties with my father and wife.

Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Alderperson Candidate

Questionnaire

Instructions: Please state your position on the following issues. Please limit answers to 100 words. Any answers exceeding the word count limitations will be cut after 100 words.

If you have filled out this questionnaire before, you may skip starred** questions or modify previous answers to those questions. If you skip starred answers on this questionnaire, we will re-publish your 2017 answers.

**1. Why are you seeking this office?

My wife and I are concerned about what skyrocketing property taxes, increased crime, and failing public schools will mean for our family. These 3 issues are directly connected.

In a rising interest rate environment, the city's habit of refinancing debt at low interest rates will not be an option.

Debt service has increased from 10% (\$20 million) of the annual budget in 2008, to 15% (\$47 million) in 2018, and projected to reach 20% in 2023.

My fear is that debt burden will be placed directly on city residents in the form of higher property taxes and depleted public services.

**2. What in your background or experiences qualifies you to understand the unique needs facing small businesses?

I understand the unique needs of small business because I know nothing else. Throughout high school and college I worked for my aunt's family owned restaurant and my family's friends restaurant. I have been self-employed most of my professional career. I have owned and operated 3 small business. I know what it means to make a payroll. I understand how hard it is to hire and keep good employees. I personally have the calluses of sweat equity from the time, energy and devotion it takes to build something from the ground up.

****3. What are the most important issues the businesses in your district face?**

Crime

Increasing property taxes

A changing community and workforce

****4. What is your perception of Madison's business brand? How do you think business in Madison is perceived locally, statewide, and nationally?**

As the seat of state and local government, and home to UW, I believe that the Madison business brand is overshadowed. Although it is difficult to define what that business brand is, I believe that the diversity of industry is in fact a strength. Having many strong business markets provides for a diverse economy, encourages innovation, and helps shield the community from sector specific economic swings.

****5. How can the City of Madison best attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce?**

Madison must get a handle on its public debt and taxation. It needs to focus on providing quality core public services and not over extend itself by trying to solve every societal ailment. Too many young middle class families are fleeing the city to escape crushing property taxes, crime, and a failing education system.

6. How can the City of Madison build an inclusive economy and ensure the advanced industries accelerating here provide opportunity for all?

Government does not and cannot "build" an economy. Individuals build economies through free market interactions. The City of Madison can however encourage economic growth by providing for the common public safety, quality education, and reasonable tax and regulatory requirements.

7. With Madison's economic momentum, a continued focus must be placed on infrastructure improvements. What strategies would you recommend for the city to meet the diverse needs of worker mobility and housing?

Serious consideration needs to be given to easement when zoning new development. As new areas are increased in allowable density traffic patterns are not being built into the equation. The Park St. Corridor and Fish Hatchery corridor are perfect examples of "pocket" development without consideration of the whole area. I am not against development, but it needs to be looked at as a whole.

8. How do you define economic development? Please elaborate.

Allowing free market interactions to dictate price and scarcity.

9. The 115th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard is an important driver of the Madison economy, providing an annual economic impact of over \$100 million, emergency and fire services for the Dane County Regional Airport, and over \$1 million in tuition assistance to area student guardsmen. Do you support the Wing as it seeks to continue its mission by acquiring next-generation F-35A jets? Please explain your answer.

The F-35A program has proven to be one of the most expensive and lengthy projects ever taken on by the DOD. The F-35's combat experience is being tested in Syria by the Israeli Airforce and there are serious concerns about Russia's new S-300 missile system counter strike capabilities. I believe that this must be tested further before the DOD commits additional resources to an already costly program. Regardless of the 115th's local economic impact, the purchase of additional fighter jets must be weighed in terms of the overall national defense mission first and foremost.

10. If offered an endorsement from the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, would you accept it? *

Yes

No

By submitting this candidate questionnaire, you agree that the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce may publish it with the intent of sharing it with its membership and the general public. *

I acknowledge that the Chamber will publish my answers to this questionnaire

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