



Inyo County Employees Association

AFSCME Local 315

### **Election 2022--Board of Supervisors Questions:**

Kody Jaeger, District 3

1. With new leadership in county administration, what challenges do you foresee and what approach will you implement to generate fervor and action in the topics you want to promote?  
*The challenges of new leadership is change and apathy. In every organization you will have individuals who will make all efforts to keep things the same and others who don't believe the changes will make any difference. A new manager/supervisor, should not make any changes until there has been an assessment of the process, communication with those that use the process the most and decide if the process needs improvement or should remain as it is. Too often, new managers/supervisors will make the mistake of implementing quick and big changes without the collaboration or communication of the teams that use them the most. This is the result of a manager/supervisor thinking of themselves and not their team. The employees are the experts and have internal knowledge that is invaluable and needed when updating any process or making changes. When a workforce is experiencing apathy, this is caused by a lack of engagement. Engaged employees are vital to the health and success of any organization. It is a failure of leadership if your employees are not engaged in what they do. Most leaders and managers focus on employee satisfaction. This is a mistake. The focus needs to be on employee engagement. This can only happen when the workforce trusts it's managers/supervisors. Building trust through integrity, competency and a genuine caring about the employees.*
2. Do you see county administration as your boss or are you *their* boss? What decision-making role should board supervisors perform in our organizational design?  
*I see County Administration as a member of the Team. I am not a fan of using the term, "Boss". The future of employee relations and organizational structure is moving away from the pyramid shape of Leadership and will eventually be a flat line. I look forward to that day. An organization of competent, capable individuals who share common goals and work as a Team. The role of the Board of Supervisors should be that of a 'Listener'. Listening to all voices in an organization, gathering data and feedback. Listening is the first step to improving any workplace. The Board of Supervisors should take the role of supporter. Supporting the employees in all areas and giving them the tools to be successful in their positions.*

3. Are you in favor of remote work and flexible work schedules? How do you see the county utilizing these options in the future?

*I've been a proponent of employees working remotely before Covid-19. Now, in this era of Covid-19 it is essential that the workplaces adapt to this new reality. The idea that an employee working from home is 'less' productive and not working as 'hard' as other employees that come into the offices is an outdated mindset from the 1960's. If an employee is not productive or experiencing performance issues, this should be addressed. Blanket policies should never be enacted based on the actions of a few. We need to trust our employees and expect the best of them not the worst.*

*Flexibility in the workplace is critical to productivity and employee engagement. There are many challenges our employees face every day. Child care, transportation, family emergencies. The flexibility to work a different schedule should be there. Thinking outside the box when it comes to staffing and coverage should always be welcome. And this can be done without sacrificing customer service or quality of services.*

*Working remotely is going to be the wave of the future and this will be due to high costs of housing, child care, costs of gas to and from work and commute time.*

4. We have been struggling like many agencies across the country with recruitment and retention. What are creative strategies we can implement for recruiting qualified candidates? Do you feel special considerations should be made for our remote locations such as Tecopa, Lone Pine, and Independence?

*Yes, the Great Resignation is hitting all organizations and businesses very hard. Some strategies to recruit and attract employees is to be creative in where you are advertising. An example for Inyo County is to advertise in Mountain Climbing/Bouldering, Fishing, Hiking and Retirement magazines both online and in print. Utilize the big publications in the nearest metropolitan areas both North and South of Inyo County. The uniqueness of Inyo County is that we have the outdoors and that should be a part of the benefits package. Offering free skiing for employees twice a month/mandatory fishing days twice a month/Hiking/Climbing...utilizing the outdoors and the time off to enjoy it. Facebook has a great benefits program and focuses on seven areas: Health, Family, Community, Growth, Finance, Convenience and Time Away. Employees should thrive in all stages of their life at work and at home.*

*We have a generation of young employees coming into the workforce who value their time and experiences more than money. We need to adapt.*

*And yes, the remote areas need incentives such as a work vehicle they can take home, free Sirius/XM for their vehicles due to a commute, every other Friday or*

*Monday off/paid. Free lunch delivered once a week. Most employees want to feel appreciated. Big and small gestures go a very long way.*

5. How can we address a lack of available housing for low and middle income families, particularly as it relates to recruitment and retention of dedicated public service and health care employees? Why have all efforts failed to produce results, and what will you do differently to resolve this community-wide problem? Should the county use a different approach to the homeless?

*This is a very big problem all of our businesses and organizations are experiencing.*

*The recruiter will need to dedicate time to searching available apartments and houses to rent to assist candidates. Relationships will need to be built with rental agencies/realtors to be given an incentive to 'hold' or 'notify' recruiter of upcoming vacancies.*

*Inyo County needs to purchase modulars that can be used for new hires up to six months until long term housing can be found. Utilizing hotels and even Airbnb and VRBO. The priority is getting the candidates/new hires here. These will need to be advertised as part of the recruitment. 'Assistance with housing'. We have a very caring and active community. We should reach out and ask our community members to house new hires. This could be done safely and pre screen potential homes for new hires to share for a limited time.*

*As for the homeless crisis, the approach from the County needs to be more visible. I'm unclear of what the approach is at this time. I know some efforts are being made to utilize spaces for affordable housing in the City of Bishop but I don't believe it is a solution. I believe we need more data on the number of homeless to truly connect each person with the proper services and to come up with an effective strategy towards a solution. Some homeless are in vehicles and are productive and have different needs than an individual with mental health issues and no shelter. I do believe a shelter is needed and more public restrooms. A safe space is critical for the homeless.*

6. Inflation in food, child care costs, fuel and rent is forcing difficult choices for our Local 315 members and their families. As a Board of Supervisor, what changes would you support to offset these difficulties?

*As a Board of Supervisor I would research and advocate for gas cards for our employees, use of company vehicles and remote work one to two days a week to offset the costs of eating out and gas to and from work. On site Child care is always a option and a big perk to organizations. A collaboration with the local businesses in Inyo County to agree to a significant discount to any Inyo County employee. (Hopefully, this is already in existence at some level. )*

7. How could employees address a workplace problem with upper management without fear of retaliation? What if our upper management refuses to acknowledge the problem exists?  
*An employee should never fear upper management. A workplace with an atmosphere of fear is not productive, safe or healthy. The employers number one priority in the workplace is to keep it's employees safe and healthy. If Upper management is not listening or supporting an employee complaint then the employee needs to go above that individual. Jumping the chain of command is allowed when all efforts to remedy the situation have failed due to the inaction of the immediate supervisor. I would recommend doing a 360 review/anonymous review of the upper management/supervisors by the employees. This will give HR and leadership a starting point. Intimidating, bullying or retaliatory behavior by any Manager/Supervisor is unacceptable. Bad managers/supervisors is the number one reason an employee will leave a job. It's essential that bad manager/supervisors get the trainings they need and if the behavior does not change they must be separated. If this is common in the workplace more leadership and management trainings are needed. I believe in life long learning. Supervisory/Leadership trainings should be mandatory at least four times a year for all in these roles.*
8. What is your experience working with unions? How has that experience impacted the way you will do business if elected?  
*I haven't worked with an organization that has a union. Working collectively together to improve the lives of employees is smart and effective. If elected I would like to learn more about the challenges the union faces in Inyo County.*
9. AFSCME Local 315 encourages membership of all employees without consideration of their education level, ethnicity, gender or identity, political association, spiritual denomination, sexual preference, age, physical disabilities, vaccination status or appearance. Should we, or how do we ensure our county policies are reflective of the diverse community we serve?  
*Highlighting diversity begins with visibility. Such as, electing the first Native Woman to the Inyo County Board of Supervisors. ☺*  
*It is a fact, that when an under represented group sees the success of someone in their group, a barrier is broken. All policies should be reviewed with groups that have a stake in the outcomes...which would be fair and respectful representation and considerations should a member of any group decide to join the AFSCME. This is done by including the groups in the development and review of the policies.*