

Steve Widmyer's response to OpenCDA.com claim that he's "unsuitable" for CdA mayor:

I think we all knew that it was just a matter of time before the time-honored Souza tactics would begin. I am a candidate who brings the best skills and qualifications to the office of Mayor. But the Souza camp is now in the mode of doing anything or saying anything in order to get her elected. This latest display by Souza's campaign is just one more reason to reject her candidacy. This is what she would bring to City Hall. This mode of operation would be extremely damaging to our community. What I want to do is address the three issues that the Souza campaign has brought up today.

1) In 1997, I was involved with the NIC Board of Trustees who voted not to renew the contract of the president, Bob Bennett. What I can say about this is that I think it was a mistake. And I own up to that mistake. Myself and Sue Thilo resigned our positions because we had lost trust in the board. Nothing nefarious as the Souza camp tries to claim. It was a situation we felt that we could not operate under. Shortly after this decision I met with Bob Bennett and we had a long conversation about what had occurred. Today I see Bob on occasion in local spots and we always have a good conversation. I was 36 years old at the time and this was my first experience on a public board. At the time I was frustrated with the process. Today I am 53 years old, and I have grown as a person. We all learn from mistakes that we have made in the past. It's from those mistakes that we become wiser and a better person. I have learned a lot in the past 16 years and today I am qualified and positively ready to be the Mayor of Coeur d Alene.

2) The Souza camp and Bill McCrory labor to make a big issue about the parking signs at the Fort Ground, and this is ridiculous at best. I think everyone needs to remember that Souza supporter Bill McCrory was one of the people who filed a law suit to stop the education corridor. This law suit was so feeble it was thrown out in a summary judgment. It never even made it to trial. McCrory is no attorney, but he plays one in his spare time. The situation surrounding the signs is that North Idaho College installed the signs as a goodwill gesture to me. The first I knew about the signs was when I saw them installed. I didn't give it a second thought as I figured NIC went through the channels to get them installed. Then one day I received an email from the City that they had been removed. I responded that I wasn't happy about that as I thought it was a nice gesture to help a small business that had struggled through a tough time during the Education Corridor construction. After I sent the email, I moved on. Again hardly anything nefarious here.

3) There's always something positive in every situation. By resorting to this mudslinging, Mary's camp has given me another opportunity to discuss my qualifications for mayor. As I have mentioned in my campaign material, I received an accounting degree from the University of Idaho in December of 1982. In May of 1983, I sat for the CPA exam and passed all 4 parts of it in the first sitting. I went through all of the procedures and earned my license as a Certified Public Accountant. I kept my license active from 1984 until the middle 1990s. Since I had been working in the private industry for 12 years and I didn't think I was going to go in to public accounting I did not pay the fee to renew my license. I knew that at any time I could take some continuing education classes and renew my license if in fact I ever went to work as a public accountant. So simply put, I did go through all of the education, passed the exam and earned the designation as a CPA. I do have extensive experience in budget and finance that will be a great asset to all taxpayers as I will make sure that all taxpayer dollars will be spent responsibly. Instead of talking about her qualifications, Mary and her camp seek to obscure the fact that she doesn't have the qualification to oversee a \$70 million dollar budget.

We've seen Mary operate in the public realm for many years now. We've seen her pattern of personal attacks when people step forward to challenge her wild-eyed conspiracy theories. This is not the way to restore trust in the community. I can't say strongly enough that this type of negativity and false smear campaigns are exactly what the citizens of Coeur d'Alene do NOT want. I want to lead Coeur d'Alene into a POSITIVE future - not the false, negative path of the Souza campaign.

Let's bring Coeur d'Alene together. Thank you, Steve Widmyer.