Barry Buchanan acknowledged receipt of the questions. When his answers were not received by deadline a follow-up message was left on his answering machine.

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I have heard Sheriff Elfo speak to the issue of immigration and undocumented immigrants. I agree with the Sheriff’s position that there is no need for local law enforcement to be proactively involved in immigration issues. There are enough Border Patrol Agents in our area to do their job, and the Sheriff’s department can focus on their job. They are not Border Patrol Agents. The Sheriff’s office complies with the law as to undocumented immigrants and that approach should continue.

Water is the most important currency in the world, and balancing the needs of Families, Farms and Fish is not easy. Our residents want us to manage our fiscal and water budgets in a way that treats our environment carefully and protects the right for everyone to live within it fairly. I created a detailed solution that addresses this issue that allows well users to store winter water for summer time mitigation. Rooted in science, this approach promotes water conservation, respects tribal treaties and senior water rights, trackable in-stream flows and acknowledges water as a finite resource. See: www.voterudbrowne.com/water

The measurement for in-stream flows was always intended to be an average measurement over time and the Department of Ecology is interpreting the instream flows to a time specific measurement, not an average. When you take a streamflow reading when the flow is below average at a specific time and ignore the overall average readings, ecology extremists always skew the results to create a problem which may not be realistic.

The City of Bellingham continues to introduce phosphorus laden water into Lake Whatcom on a weekly basis from the middle fork of the Nooksack River to meet the drinking water needs of the community. Reducing the introduction of this Nooksack river middle fork foreign water to Lake Whatcom would mitigate some of the developed watershed issues.

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An immigrant and former multinational business owner I am very aware of the social and financial concerns about legal and illegal immigration, especially our treatment of the Dreamers. I know many people want the County to get involved in farm labor and immigration issues and some may even incorrectly claim that we have the authority to do so. The truth is the County government has very limited authority related to labor or immigration. The County only has the legal right to get involved in these matters if it relates to a health, sanitation or public safety situation.

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None-The foreign immigration labor issue is the business of the State and Federal Government.
Whatcom County Candidates

Candidate responses were not edited by Whatcom Watch.

Candidates were asked to keep their answers to 100 words or less.

Candidates reviewed their answers in the layout before the paper was sent to the printer.

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**Whatcom County Council — District 2**

With a realistic perspective that water is finite, that many users do not have legal rights to water, and with the perspective that while the water quantity problem is seasonal the water quality problem is year-round. Any solution will require a change in state legislation, but any state legislative change cannot alter the tribes’ position as having senior rights, nor can a legislative change alter the fact that water is finite in volume and increased conservation and mitigation efforts will likely be needed in order to resume issuing permits to landowners dependent on exempt wells.

**Whatcom County Council — District 3**

People have made investments based on the way the system was functioning, but that system was broken. This needs to be sorted out. I don’t have all the solutions, but a few premises that I would start with: treaties must be kept; promises to citizens should be kept; long-term resources should be protected. And while not everyone will be happy, we should have a process that everyone agrees is fair.

**What role, if any, do you believe the county plays in balancing the labor needs of farms with the increasing pressure from the federal government to reduce the number of undocumented or improperly documented immigrants?**

Whatcom County government should promote a community where undocumented, improperly documented and DACA immigrants feel safe when interacting with our schools, businesses, public health agents, and local law enforcement. This is why I have proposed a discussion of the “Keep Whatcom Families Working Act.” The Act proposes that County resources should be prohibited from being used for immigration enforcement, that County services should be provided regardless of immigration status, and that County law enforcement shall not detain people based on perceived or actual immigration status.

I believe the counties responsibility is to the residents of the county, including farm workers that are seasonal and undocumented residents. All immigrants must know that the county and our law enforcement will not ask or use any information they receive in the course of their duties to assist the Federal Government (ICE) in rounding up residents that we care about and rely on in Whatcom County. That is an essential requirement if we are to expect victims of crime and witnesses of crimes to come forward and it is the humane and right thing to do.

**Whatcom County continues to be a place where many workers, both documented and undocumented, are employed. We should follow the city of Bellingham’s lead with regard to federal immigration laws. We should make sure that a path to citizenship is clearly identified and that people have the support they need to become citizens. People should feel comfortable reporting crime. I don’t want criminals to be overlooked because victims and witnesses may fear revealing their citizenship status.**

Whatcom Watch