

1. How Communities Are Funded

"My tax dollars shouldn't pay for that."

Ask:

- Whose tax dollars should?
- If everyone uses it, who should pay for it?
- What happens if no one does?

"Why are our roads so bad if we're paying so much in sales tax?"

Ask:

- How much of your sales tax actually stays with the city?
- How many miles of streets are there to maintain?
- What does one mile of street reconstruction cost?

"The city has plenty of money."

Ask:

- Compared to what?
- Is that money already legally dedicated to something else?
- Are you looking at one year's budget or decades of infrastructure needs?

"Reserve funds are unnecessary."

Ask:

- What happens when a fire truck breaks down?
- What happens after a tornado?
- If property taxes are collected twice a year, how do you pay bills every month?

"Tax is theft."

Ask:

- Who pays for the roads?
- Who answers your 911 call?
- Who maintains the water system?
- If everyone stopped paying taxes tomorrow, what services would you still expect?

2. Who Builds Communities?

"Why doesn't the city just do it?"

Ask:

- Who is "the city"?
- Should every taxpayer pay for your priority?
- If not government, who else could help?

"I wish we had..."

Ask:

- Who could make that happen?
- Would you volunteer?
- Would you donate?
- Would you support a tax increase to build it?

"They won't let us."

Ask:

- Who is "they"?
- Have you attended the meeting?
- Have you asked why?
- Is there actually a law preventing it?

"Someone needs to..."

Ask:

- Why not you?
- What skills or resources could you contribute?
- Who could you partner with?

"The city should..."

Ask:

- Is that something government is legally allowed to do?
- Should government do it, or should citizens?
- Would you support paying for it?

3. What Government Can (and Can't) Do

"Why do we need another _____ business?"

Ask:

- Who decides what businesses succeed?
- Should government decide which restaurants survive?
- What if someone said your favorite business couldn't open?

"The city should stop them."

Ask:

- Stop them from doing what?
- Are they breaking a law?
- Would you want government stopping your legal choices?

"We should condemn that building."

Ask:

- Is it unsafe?
- Or do we just not like how it looks?
- Where do private property rights begin?

"The mayor should make them clean it up."

Ask:

- Does the city actually have that legal authority?
- Is it a nuisance or simply an eyesore?
- What does the city code say?

"The city should make businesses stay open later."

Ask:

- Should government decide business hours?
- Who pays the employees?
- Would you want government telling you when you can close your business?

"The city didn't give me money to start my business."

Ask:

- Should taxpayers fund private businesses?
- If your business fails, who bears the loss?
- Would you want your tax dollars paying for someone else's dream?

4. Why Your Words Matter

"Nobody wants to work."

Ask:

- Is that actually true?
- What impression does that leave on someone considering moving here?
- Would you apply for a job in a community where everyone says that?

"This town is dying."

Ask:

- Would you invest here after reading that?
- Would you buy a house here?
- What message does that send to your own children?

"The hospital is terrible."

Ask:

- Are there challenges? Absolutely.
- But if every doctor reads that online, will it help recruit physicians?
- How do we solve problems without damaging our reputation?

"There's nothing to do here."

Ask:

- Compared to where?
- Have you tried everything?
- Are you supporting the events and organizations that already exist?

"Why would anyone come here?"

Ask:

- If that's what residents say, why would visitors come?
- How many opportunities are we talking ourselves out of?

5. Government Isn't a Business

"We need to run government like a business."

Ask:

- Which parts?
- Should the fire department only protect paying customers?
- Should the library require a profit?
- Should roads only be paved where they're profitable?

"Just cut the budget."

Ask:

- Which service would you eliminate?
- Police?
- Fire?
- Parks?
- Libraries?
- Street maintenance?

"Why don't we get rid of that department?"

Ask:

- What problem would that create?
- Who depends on that service?
- Is it legally required?

"If it doesn't make money, shut it down."

Ask:

- Should police officers spend their day writing tickets instead of preventing crime?
- Should firefighters send invoices before responding?
- Should libraries only serve people who can pay?
- Should parks charge admission every time someone wants to take a walk?

"Public employees work for us. They don't need raises."

Ask:

- Where will tomorrow's police officers, teachers, and public works employees come from?
- Should they earn enough to support their families?
- If neighboring communities pay more, where will our workforce go?
- Aren't they residents and taxpayers, too?