

Position 4

Brian O'Neill

OPB: One priority I'm seeing from most of the county commission candidates is to lower costs or increase affordability. Given that there are so many outside factors that influence the economy and cost of living, what will you as a commissioner do to keep costs down for Clackamas County residents?

O'Neill: I know we have obligations that are long term that can't be reduced. We need to identify these. We need to identify the staffing and costs associated with each department and understand the vital work these departments do for our community. We need to identify all other costs associated with running the county. We need to identify revenue we take in and understand that the revenue we made in the prior year may be less. This is the first step in how we try to keep costs down. These are tough times and until we become fiscally responsible for our revenue going out and coming in developing a budget and sticking to it, it is vital in keeping costs down. I understand that special projects will always come up and unless they have been budgeted for or we don't see a surplus we just can't move forward and perhaps we will look at whether funds will allow moving forward in the next budget cycle. Adding fees and passing more taxes is not the answer to our funding problems.

OPB: In addition to affordability, several of you have listed public safety and "fully funding CCSO" among your priorities. The county's ambulance service provider, AMR, has historically failed to meet response time goals. The contract the county signed with AMR last summer also included a huge price increase for patients. How do you balance improved response times while also prioritizing affordability?

I would first like to review the contract we signed with AMR, and I hope there is Liquidated damage clause in the contract. If they stated, the response time is so many minutes per call and are not meeting their responsibility we can levee a fee per delay for not meeting their obligation. I would also review and see if we can terminate the contract for cause. I also want to know what's the fee structure looks like to determine the cost to our community. If we have an opportunity to open the bidding again, I would be welcome to sit at the table. I have years of experience with contracts and if the language is not favor full for Clackamas County, we need to open up the talks again if possible.

OPB: As for CCSO, the county discovered some questionable financial management within the sheriff's office last year. For those that say they want to "fully fund CCSO"

can you clarify, is CCSO not currently fully funded or has that been the case previously? How would you fund the office while ensuring sound financial management and fiscal responsibility?

All departments within Clackamas County must stay at or below budget. I understand the Sheriff's department is currently understaffed and additional overtime for our officers is needed to keep the public safe. I'm not sure if these factors into the dispute the county Commissioners have with the Sheriffs current budget? We all need to tighten our belts, but sheriffs department is one of those areas that I would really want to dig into and find out what calls they respond to what calls are taken over the phone how many officers they have during any one shift. Communication and providing help to this department is crucial to the community. We need to work with sheriff's department to build a budget that allows them to function the way community needs them to function.

OPB: Some candidates are saying the county needs to build more homes to lower housing costs and help end unsheltered homelessness. What are your strategies for achieving this? In what ways does protection of rural parts of the county factor into this goal? If you feel building more homes is the wrong solution, what do you propose for lowering housing costs and ending unsheltered homelessness?

I'm not opposed to more housing, what I am opposed to is not having a procedure in place to grow. A blank statement we need more homes doesn't work for. Have we identified properties that could accommodate Low Income-affordable housing and homeless shelters. Have we worked on long term funding for a program like this? It's kind like the cart before the horse. I know the need is right now, but we can't put together a program that will fail inside a year. We need partners that have already shown success in other projects. What about Habit for Humanity, what are they doing and how can we take some of the tools they use to develop a long-term plan. What have other communities done to combat this issue, what has failed and what has worked. There has to be some success stories out there that we can tap into. Whatever direction we go mass transit needs to be at the table to provide service to and from any areas we come up with.

I would be interested to see what the rural areas have to say. I live here in Milwaukie and what I think they need and what they need are usually two different things. They need to be at the table and provide their feedback for decisions that are made. I'm not going to make decisions without their impute and guidance.

OPB: In the past year some Oregon counties have firmly stated their status as a sanctuary jurisdiction and stated their agencies will not cooperate with federal

immigration enforcement without a judicial warrant. Is this a stance you think Clackamas County should take? Why or why not?

This is a tough question to ask the way it was worded Yes and no. We should help the feds if a fugitive is in our area. No, we shouldn't help round up law abiding immigrates. I tried for 5 years trying to get an employee through immigration process close to ten thousand dollars and at ever step of the way there were additional hurdles. We never did get it completely. I don't have an answer, but I do know that what is in place is not fair or cheap. It needs to be fixed.