

Position 4

Bill Osburn

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?

Osburn: I think the biggest thing in the County level we can do is get out of the way of affordability. Continually adding an increasing fees and taxes do not make anything more affordable.

Adding privilege taxes to utilities that have been increasing an already elevated rate is another issue. As elected officials will try to sell the increase as just making sure the big companies like PGE pay their way, PGE has to pass that tax through to the consumer. So much like increasing corporate taxes, utilities are the same, it's not the companies or providers that's paying the extra tax. It's the residents.

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?

Any company that is providing services like this should meet the expected response times. If they don't, then I would look to see if other providers are meeting that time and marking a change. The reality is this is life and death. At the end of the day, regardless of how little or much first responders cost, we need the best care out there to ensure there is no unneeded loss of life. We should also look for medical transport as many people use ambulances as a means of transport for non serious issues.

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?

I wouldn't fully fund anything that is wasteful or subpar. If the sheriff's office needs to make adjustments or improve transparency, that needs to happen before they ask for more money. The days of a blank check I believe are behind us with information so easily found on the Internet. Again, when it comes to first responders, we want the best, when it comes to prioritizing a budget and keeping track of where the money goes, we also need the best. I would never blindly support any organization that isn't physically responsible. That being said I fully support our Clackamas County law-enforcement officers and would offer myself to help work through the budget and ensure that the bureaucrat side of the department is physically responsible and transparent to help foster public confidence and trust on the money end. We already have confidence and trust in the officers out there, keeping us safe.

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?

First, let me be clear that we don't have a homeless issue, we have a mental health crisis. Homelessness is merely a symptom and any program that does not address mental health and or substance abuse, I would not support. Government never does anything at a competitive price, so I don't believe we should be building houses, instead we should be helping to facilitate the private sector to accomplish this. I believe the main thing we can do to help lower the costs once again is to get out of the way. Increasing permit costs and red tape, as well as SDC's or system development charges, make it expensive just to buy a piece of paper so that you can start to build a new home. A reduction in these fees and or waiver on some, especially if low income housing is being built will help to facilitate the private sector to build more houses and a lower cost than if the county were trying to do it themselves.

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?

I do not believe in violating any oath of office to uphold the constitution and the laws can coincide with a sanctuary jurisdiction. A lot of people have issues with the way the immigration officers have been handling themselves, however the sanctuary jurisdictions have created this issue. When we remove all ability for city, county, or state law enforcement on any level, including correction officers to report immigration status issues,

then we leave the federal government no other choice but to completely turn a blind eye or step in and enforce immigration laws themselves. I wouldn't want to live in any other country in the United States, or any other county other than Clackamas County, but we have laws and we are all expected to follow them.