

Position 4

Pete Wease

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?

Wease: As a commissioner I'm unable to control inflation or outside economic forces, but I can control how carefully taxpayer dollars are managed. My background and personal experience in financial services taught me to live within your means and make responsible decisions before a crisis forces your hand. I'll push for transparent budget reviews, ensure departments use their allocated funding appropriately, and resist overpromising. Sound financial stewardship today protects residents from painful cuts tomorrow.

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?

Balancing response times and affordability requires careful contract oversight and accountability. I support performance-based agreements that hold service providers to clear standards while protecting residents, especially those who are uninsured or underinsured, from unreasonable costs. I'd need to review the current contract details fully before proposing specific changes, but my priority is making sure no resident hesitates to call 911 because of cost.

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?

Fully funding public safety means setting a clear, realistic budget and ensuring every dollar is used as intended and accounted for. Before committing to specific funding levels I'd want to review the sheriff's office budget thoroughly and understand exactly where gaps exist. I believe in public safety funding, but it must come with some transparency and accountability to Clackamas County taxpayers.

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?

Building more homes is part of the solution but it has to be done thoughtfully and in the right locations. I support workforce housing and targeted development in areas already served by infrastructure, not at the expense of the rural character that defines much of Clackamas County. On homelessness, housing alone isn't enough. We need wraparound services including mental health and addiction support. I'd want to assess what's working before committing to a specific strategy.

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 believe in people's dignity and in keeping families together. At the county level, my role isn't to enforce federal immigration law, it's to ensure all residents feel safe engaging with local services and law enforcement. I'd rather invest county resources in connecting people to legal pathways and support services than create fear and chaos. People should be able to come forward, identify themselves, and access a process, not hide in the shadows. I'll work within the law while always putting human dignity first.