

Courier & Press Candidate Questionnaire

Answers submitted at 4:54pm on 6/20/16

1) Is Vanderburgh County doing everything it can to maximize local revenue to pay for repair and reconstruction projects on county-maintained roads? If not, what more can be done?

I believe focusing on roads is one of the most crucial areas for a county commissioner considering it is a resource used by all of us. This year Vanderburgh County residents will be fortunate to see significantly more than double the road funding of previous years thanks to the release of a higher percentage of COIT (County Option Income Tax) funds (85% instead of just 50%). This will allow Vanderburgh County to also benefit from the state of Indiana fund matching process, so county roads should receive more attention than any time in recent memory. But to ensure those funds are spent wisely, we will need to deploy good long-term planning and be fiscally responsible to accomplish the most with those funds. If elected, I plan to utilize best-practices when it comes to road maintenance issues and explore more of these creative solutions considering the critical nature that the road infrastructure has in Vanderburgh County. It will also be important to have a commissioner who is already accustomed to frugal budgeting and decision-making in their line of work as a business owner to help stretch road dollars.

2) Are you satisfied with the way the County Commissioners are supervising Burdette Park? If not, why not?

In high school I was selected for the Hoosier Boys State program hosted annually by the American Legion, so the history of Burdette Park being founded by that organization makes it even more gratifying to contemplate making positive changes there. As the issues facing commissioners typically orient around the park leadership, I look forward to learning more from the board about what is working well and what may need some adjustments. Fortunately, I already have confidence in and a positive working relationship with some of the board members there so I am optimistic that we will be able to find positive solutions for the betterment of Burdette Park.

3) Should the commissioners ask legislators to make changes to the tax sale process and, if so, what should those changes be?

Some local officials would like the tax sale process to be quicker than the typical 1.5 year to 3 year process, but I am also aware that certain checks are in place for good reason to provide for homeowners who fall on hard times. When it comes to those interested in purchasing, improving, or consolidating homes and properties this can also be difficult to navigate especially considering the many layers of government involved. These issues will require a commissioner who is interested in respecting the rights of property owners and those trying to improve communities to see what solutions are available within the state-run process. The legislature might be open to moratoriums within certain timeframes available to each taxpayer for homes similar to the restructuring that happened under federal welfare reform, for instance. This might allow a way to differentiate between frequent and infrequent properties up for auction and at the same time it could speed up the process.

4) Should the commissioners continue to allow the new land bank to cherry-pick vacant and blighted properties the county owns because of unpaid property taxes? If not, why not? If so, why? Would you propose any changes to the agreement? What would they be?

I am of the opinion that it is important to do whatever we can to reduce the barriers and red tape for residents so as to encourage unfettered home ownership when possible. The commissioners have informed me they consider the pending arrangement with the land bank a win-win for both the county and city because each can apply their distinctive competencies toward the arrangement. As a result, my understanding is that concerns over vacant and blighted properties under this agreement will mostly fall to zones that the city will prefer to address and be the responsibility of city officials. However, those properties not turned over to the city with vacant and blighted status will need to be monitored closely to ensure new checks and balances that take place starting on July 1 such as county treasurer oversight are working properly. We know that home ownership is much better than prolonged

government maintenance and continual turnover of properties and it provides numerous benefits including safer communities and a better tax base for services that are especially important with rising service costs.

5) What are the best options for Vanderburgh County to cope with jail overcrowding?

With the current commission signing a contract last week to provide electronic surveillance for inmates to alleviate overcrowding, to properly address this issue will require we review each available option thoroughly. A number of issues actually relate to new state rules on local jail populations serving a term less than a year restricting inmates from moving to other facilities. It will take a commissioner who already has a good working relationship with those elected leaders to see what solutions may address our local concerns. There are also some important short-term solutions that I have learned current commissioners are working on in conjunction with Sheriff Wedding, including dormitory style housing which may actually be more efficient when it comes to capacity. There are also long-term local solutions that have been contemplated which include developing the last pod and working with judges regarding trial speeds that I would want to assess the proposed costs with fellow commissioners.

6) Do you envision any changes to Vanderburgh County's scoring system to evaluate companies' requests for tax abatements and, if so, what would those changes be?

It is a simple fact that Vanderburgh County has to be competitive to attract and maintain businesses which are the lifeblood of our local economy. With a long history of past successes in Evansville of notable industries producing vehicles, furniture, and appliances, we know it is possible to establish a base here but the conditions must be favorable. It is great that we have attracted businesses like SS&C and FedEx recently, and while it is easy to obtain, we need to explore options that make it easier to maintain those conditions that keep a Whirlpool and Kargus in town. If we are mindful of that when we look to attract new businesses especially in production-oriented, budding, and even exclusive industries, and can keep government interference to an absolute minimum, we will be poised for real growth. Current commissioners have made it known they are concerned with the length of time for the abatements and how they might affect existing industry which I believe are important criteria for the next commissioner to weigh in on when structuring these efforts. I believe that being a business owner will allow me to better understand how to attract companies.

7) Is Vanderburgh County adequately prepared for a natural disaster, and why or why not? If not, what changes would you advocate?

As my wife and I were ourselves recipients of sandbags in the significant 2011 flooding along Pigeon Creek and the Ohio River, we have seen firsthand the responsiveness of our local EMA office in times of crisis. Being prepared for the worst situations can be tedious work and difficult to know how best to prepare, but I believe that work is best done by local offices and local people that know better the circumstances that will need a response in assisting residents. I've been informed that under the leadership of our local emergency management office, many drills are conducted to assess preparedness on a regular basis. That office was also very responsive to the needs concerning the recent tornado that touched down near Diamond and Hwy 41 from what I understand. Helping to maintain this preparedness for our local community will be paramount for the next commissioner because it is in those of times of need that you truly want that resource functioning properly. I look forward to working with Commission President Ungethiem on these issues more closely, as I know he has helped significantly to keep this vital function working properly.

8) Should the County Commissioners rotate the companies that receive county government's towing business, and why or why not?

It is beneficial to routinely review the best options available to Vanderburgh residents when it comes to services provided by companies to the county. Just as companies routinely bid projects in business, the bidding process should be a fair and open way for towing companies to present the efficiency of their services. This would be a similar process to when commissioners recently reviewed property and casualty insurance and healthcare coverage. We have an upcoming renewal due for the information technology contract that might benefit from the

bidding process as much as the towing contractors. It is one of the larger expenses in the county at under \$1.5 million. Routinely finding the best solution for my clients in the IT field and regularly having to put together and review contracts, I look forward to putting my decades of experience in the that field to help provide insight into this area on behalf of Vanderburgh County residents.

9) How much of your time do you anticipate the job of County Commissioner would consume?

After speaking with current and previous commissioners about what the position will require in time, I am convinced properly representing the county residents of the third largest city in Indiana will require someone with a flexible schedule. As a small business owner with the ability to set my own schedule, I believe that this will set me apart in the race because I will have the crucial ability to devote time as needed that would be more difficult with a someone who maintains a regular workweek. This schedule flexibility will also allow additional time to research the more pressing issues the county is facing and set aside the days and times necessary for meetings. It will also be easier to adapt when county business is more demanding and despite the part-time commitment, would better allow me to be better suited for the likely ebb and flow of a typical week as commissioner.

10) What makes you the best qualified candidate?

I believe there are numerous fundamental reasons that I am the most qualified candidate to be the next Vanderburgh County Commissioner representing District 1. I have nearly two decades of experience as an independent-minded local entrepreneur and Vanderburgh County small business owner who has had to abide by fiscal restraint and common sense day in and day out. Having developed extensive working knowledge of government and good rapport with many local and state elected leaders over that time and yet at the same time bringing the true outsider perspective will be best for someone serving in that capacity. Also, my long history of undertaking roles and leadership training and serving in an executive capacity will complement the role. Additionally, I believe it will be positive for the next commissioner to have numerous experiences such as I have with organizations based right in Vanderburgh County from serving on boards to serving food at the Evansville Rescue Mission to even helping build a Habitat house in Evansville. Understanding the inherently conservative nature of our county especially when it comes to limited and defined government will also set me apart. I encourage voters to visit my website www.seanselby.com to learn more.