



2024  
PRIMARY  
CANDIDATE  
INTERVIEW

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
AT-LARGE**

**MICHAEL  
FUNK  
CHIAPPETTA**  
*Democrat*

*Mike C For Council*

**QUESTION 1:**

**What are the community's housing needs and how will you help address them?**

The county residents need access to quality and affordable housing. This can be achieved by supporting the development of single and multi-use housing at all price ranges. As well I will support regulations that restrict the purchase of housing by large absentee corporations for the purpose of renting housing for the sole purpose of profit.

**QUESTION 2:**

**What one or two opportunities do you see for improvement in any county program, funding, or policy that could help grow and shape a quality workforce (e.g., quality of place, health, education, credentialling)?**

I see a great opportunity to increase the quality of life of our residents by establishing and funding a comprehensive county parks, trails, and recreational facilities plan.

**QUESTION 3:**

**Describe your evaluation process when considering new public infrastructure for the community (e.g., roads, bridges, trails, etc.). What criteria goes into your vetting the project for funding and implementation?**

Every public infrastructure funding decision should address the same basic question. How much does this funding benefit the residents of Johnson County? How much does it increase the value of what I call Human Capital? Funding decisions should be made based on the overall benefit for those who live in the county and prioritized as such.



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**BLYTHE E.  
POTTER**  
*Democrat*

*Friends of Blythe Potter*  
Bargersville, IN  
blythepotter.com  
FriendsofBlythePotter@gmail.com  
317.961.0153

**QUESTION 1:**

**What are the community's housing needs and how will you help address them?**

Work with what we currently have. Work to establish programs to fund the construction of homes that sell for a reduced cost, not allowing or capping the ability for corporations to buy homes which has resulted in continuously outbidding families and driving rental prices up. Develop new incentives/ programs for first-time homebuyers. Facilitate workshops on credit repair, budgeting, and homebuying. We need a diverse range of reasonable and affordable housing options. All people deserve safe housing. This should be a human right. Our neighbors need to live without the stressors of having to figure out how to pay for a place to live, food, childcare, savings, and expenses.

**QUESTION 2:**

**What one or two opportunities do you see for improvement in any county program, funding, or policy that could help grow and shape a quality workforce (e.g., quality of place, health, education, credentialing)?**

Johnson County Veteran services and benefits improvement. Veterans are a valuable resource. Establishing Veterans preference hiring, transitioning support with job support by partnering with local businesses who are willing to create a network for training and employment, the creation of a Veterans commission to assist with developing and supporting Veterans programs, and the consideration of property tax breaks for Veterans. I would also like to see free meals for our school-aged children. One school district in Johnson County found money in their budget for free breakfast for all students with no increased taxes or additional fees. I would love to see if this is possible for all schools.

**QUESTION 3:**

**Describe your evaluation process when considering new public infrastructure for the community (e.g., roads, bridges, trails, etc.). What criteria goes into your vetting the project for funding and implementation?**

We need to ensure the decisions made take into consideration safety, accessibility, functionality, and long-term use for the residents of our county. Public safety encompasses many things such as mental health, social services, but also public infrastructure. We have very dangerous intersections that have been neglected for years. We need to think long-term when building public amenities by considering connected trails throughout the county, safer speed limits near parks and residential areas, and crosswalks to all parks and public spaces. It is important to have conscious development with our tax dollars.



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**CHARRIE  
STAMBAUGH**  
*Democrat*

*The Committee to Elect  
Charrie Stambaugh  
charriestambaugh.com  
ElectCharrieStambaugh@  
gmail.com*

**QUESTION 1:**

**What are the community's housing needs and how will you help address them?**

We need more housing options for those in the low-income, entry-level, and working classes. Nearly 1 in 10 single family homes in Johnson County are owned by a corporate investor offering rentals attractive to working class families. But rental homes are increasing pricing with each year and new renter, pricing out families. We must identify subsidies or creative financing options to produce attainable housing. Realtors must work with residents who may require USDA loans, Hoosier Homes programming, First Place Federal Housing, and other non-traditional financing methods. Housing affordability is directly correlated to wages. We must also bring in businesses with decent, breathable wages, the opportunity for upward mobility, additional education, and professional growth.

**QUESTION 2:**

**What one or two opportunities do you see for improvement in any county program, funding, or policy that could help grow and shape a quality workforce (e.g., quality of place, health, education, credentialing)?**

Good mental health is key to stability & allows for personal/professional growth. We must identify deficiencies in public/mental health programming. As a County, very little is appropriated for health programming. When we make mental health a priority, we have fewer missed workdays, & greater potential for upward mobility; children are positively impacted, achieve higher standards, miss less days of school; the whole family succeeds. We must actually submit for funding already allocated to our county—we missed out on this last year, and that is something that cannot happen moving forward.

**QUESTION 3:**

**Describe your evaluation process when considering new public infrastructure for the community (e.g., roads, bridges, trails, etc.). What criteria goes into your vetting the project for funding and implementation?**

The County budgeted \$1.5 million on local roads, outside of highways & bridges. For a county of our size, we must work more closely with each individual city/town to identify needs. Maybe we need to address road issues with quick reporting and remediation options? Are we fully staffed? Most importantly, local roads and their construction needs affects our county citizens and their vehicles, increasing maintenance costs—and it impacts our first responders who need to get from Point A to Point B quickly without fear of the roads being in disrepair during the fast-acting responses.



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**SAAD  
TAWFEEQ**  
*Democrat*

*Committee to Elect  
Saad Tawfeeq  
1456 Norton Drive  
Greenwood IN, 46143  
secure.actblue.com/donate/  
committee-to-elect-saad-  
tawfeeq-1  
SaadforJohnsonCounty2024@  
gmail.com  
317.709.3189*

**QUESTION 1:**

**What are the community's housing needs and how will you help address them?**

The county shares an equal burden of developing quality, affordable housing as do the incorporated cities and towns within the county. As a county, we need to set standards that make housing affordable but also doesn't lower the quality that people have come to expect in Johnson County.

**QUESTION 2:**

**What one or two opportunities do you see for improvement in any county program, funding, or policy that could help grow and shape a quality workforce (e.g., quality of place, health, education, credentialing)?**

Keeping pace with the growth in the county, particularly in the northern parts of the county, we need to work to keep up our infrastructure and our public safety resources. This means that we need to be able to keep roads paved, our fire departments with the right amounts of personnel and equipment and the Johnson County Sheriff's office properly staffed to match the growth. We also need to continue funding the work that the current sheriff has started with the focus on, and creation of a special team to respond to, mental health. Mental health and addiction issues will continue to be big concerns for our citizens, and we have a responsibility to provide the right resources to help them.

**QUESTION 3:**

**Describe your evaluation process when considering new public infrastructure for the community (e.g., roads, bridges, trails, etc.). What criteria goes into your vetting the project for funding and implementation?**

We will need to continue with funding these areas through the taxes we have currently. The area that has the greatest need, but the least available funding, is the county's roads. One way to bring additional revenue in and also get road improvements is to adopt road improvement fees for new development. This will help generate road revenue.



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**RONALD  
(RON)  
BATES**  
*Republican*

*Committee to Elect Ron Bates*  
1272 Rosengarten Drive  
Greenwood, IN 46142  
ronbates.org  
ronbates47@hotmail.com  
317.590.7894

**QUESTION 1:**

**What are the community's housing needs and how will you help address them?**

Since Johnson County is the tenth fastest growing county in the state, we need to find the right balance between single family residences and apartment dwellings. Roundtable discussions with county planners and developers would be a start. Develop a comprehensive plan to address future growth.

**QUESTION 2:**

**What one or two opportunities do you see for improvement in any county program, funding, or policy that could help grow and shape a quality workforce (e.g., quality of place, health, education, credentialing)?**

We should opt-in to the state's funding to the health department for mental health issues.

**QUESTION 3:**

**Describe your evaluation process when considering new public infrastructure for the community (e.g., roads, bridges, trails, etc.). What criteria goes into your vetting the project for funding and implementation?**

1. Public hearing for community input.
2. Identify the need(s) and prioritize.
3. Seek revenue sources and tax increase as a last resort.



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**JAMES  
COPP**  
*Republican*

*Committee to Elect  
James Copp  
voteforcopp.com  
ElectJamesCopp@gmail.com*

**QUESTION 1:**

**What are the community's housing needs and how will you help address them?**

Johnson County will continue to grow. My biggest concern is that we stay ahead of that growth with the appropriate development of infrastructure. As a community and, more specifically, as a council, we need to identify those areas to focus on and do the work before it is a problem.

**QUESTION 2:**

**What one or two opportunities do you see for improvement in any county program, funding, or policy that could help grow and shape a quality workforce (e.g., quality of place, health, education, credentialing)?**

Our county has passed up multiple grants totaling millions of dollars. This is money for projects that we the taxpayer must now pay for out of our local budget. As a county government, we must explore and utilize every revenue stream that allows us to reduce the tax burden on our citizens.

I believe that we need to fund a county HR specialist. Our county is behind on this issue which opens us up for potential litigation. We need to ensure that our hard-working county employees are treated and managed the same under a uniform HR policy.

**QUESTION 3:**

**Describe your evaluation process when considering new public infrastructure for the community (e.g., roads, bridges, trails, etc.). What criteria goes into your vetting the project for funding and implementation?**

First, is this issue addressing a safety concern? If it impacts the safety of the population, we need to act. Second, what issue is this project addressing, and where does that fall on the overall county plan? We need to get ahead of the rapid growth in this county and build the infrastructure before these projects become a major inconvenience for the public. Third, is there a state or federal grant that we could utilize to fund this project? Finally, what is the cost of inaction? If we wait on this project, what will it cost the county in the future?



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**RONALD  
(RON) DEER**  
*Republican*

*Committee to Reelect Ron Deer*  
380 W Broadway  
Greenwood, Indiana 46142  
rondeer@att.net  
317.882.2418

**QUESTION 1:**

**What are the community's housing needs and how will you help address them?**

The County Council has no statutory responsibility as it relates to housing issues.

**QUESTION 2:**

**What one or two opportunities do you see for improvement in any county program, funding, or policy that could help grow and shape a quality workforce (e.g., quality of place, health, education, credentialing)?**

I believe continued and adequate funding of mental health services and facilities is essential to our community. I supported the funding of our Crisis Intervention team. I also supported funding of the new outpatient facility at Johnson Memorial Hospital. I support the funding of improvements to the Johnson County Park system which improve our quality of life.

**QUESTION 3:**

**Describe your evaluation process when considering new public infrastructure for the community (e.g., roads, bridges, trails, etc.). What criteria goes into your vetting the project for funding and implementation?**

When I look at how to fund roads, bridges, and trails I look at the short-term impact and the long-term impact on the total County budget. For example, there are not adequate funds available to meet the needs to repair all roads from the yearly budget revenue. There are however adequate revenues to issue bonds to do a large part of the work.



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**MICHELE  
ANN  
GRAVES**  
*Republican*

michelegraves5@gmail.com

**QUESTION 1:**

**What are the community's housing needs and how will you help address them?**

Council serves as the fiscal body of the county and is responsible for making financial decisions that allocate expenditure of county funds. In my experience, Council does not directly address housing needs in our community. What I can offer is my ability to communicate these concerns to those who are able to address housing needs via the many relationships I have developed over the past seven years serving as County Treasurer.

**QUESTION 2:**

**What one or two opportunities do you see for improvement in any county program, funding, or policy that could help grow and shape a quality workforce (e.g., quality of place, health, education, credentialing)?**

Johnson County is a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Our schools have personnel and programs in place to prepare our children for college and the workforce, local municipalities are engaged in improving services and amenities for taxpayers, and the County is investing in county park projects. Many local businesses and organizations are focused on enhancing the quality of life for all citizens in Johnson County and I would continue to support all these efforts.

**QUESTION 3:**

**Describe your evaluation process when considering new public infrastructure for the community (e.g., roads, bridges, trails, etc.). What criteria goes into your vetting the project for funding and implementation?**

While County Council does not evaluate which infrastructure projects are needed, Council can approve funding of projects that are presented at monthly Council meetings. Information regarding dollar amount of the project and timing for when the expenditure is needed must be provided to Council. If funds are available, the project can be approved. If not, alternative funding sources such as federal or state grants would be an option as opposed to a tax increase.