

## **1. Please provide some personal background information: Name, Occupation, Community activities.**

Alec Lefeber; Senior Content Specialist (Tech & AI Education), Pax8; Oshkosh Landmarks Commission (2025-present), Propel Oshkosh Young Professionals, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Oshkosh Community Players, Community civic education initiatives (digital outreach)

## **2. Please describe your background and qualifications for serving on the City Council, and explain the personal strengths and perspectives you would bring to the role?**

I am a Senior Content Specialist at Pax8, where I work in technology and AI education, helping translate complex business and technical topics into clear, actionable guidance. My work requires strategic thinking, clear communication, and the ability to help people navigate change, all of which are directly relevant to public service.

I also believe I would bring an important generational perspective to the Council. As a younger resident building a life in Oshkosh, I understand the challenges many people face when it comes to housing, economic opportunity, and feeling connected to their community. I want Oshkosh to remain stable and competitive, but also be a city where the next generation can afford to stay, work, and put down roots.

One of my personal strengths is communication. I know how to make complex information easier to understand, and I believe that matters in local government. I would bring a practical, forward-looking mindset to the role, with a strong interest in modernization, public communication, and helping residents feel more informed and connected to the decisions shaping their city.

## **3. What are your top priorities for the City of Oshkosh, and how do you plan to achieve these goals as a member of the City Council?**

My top priority is making sure Oshkosh is ready for the future. That starts with strong long-term planning, modern infrastructure, and making sure major city investments prepare us not just for today's needs, but for future growth.

A second priority is making Oshkosh a place where people can build a life and stay. That means supporting housing growth, retaining young talent, and strengthening the connection between UW–Oshkosh, employers, and the broader community. If we want a strong workforce and a stable tax base in the future, we need to make sure students, young professionals, and working families see opportunity here.

I also believe Oshkosh should be a city that is connected and accessible. That includes supporting public transit and walkability, making it easier for residents to get to work, school, and community life. As a council member, I would focus on practical, long-term solutions that keep Oshkosh competitive, welcoming, and prepared for the next generation.

**4. Which areas of Oshkosh do you believe should be prioritized for economic growth, and what two or three key economic development initiatives would you champion on the City Council to support that growth?**

I believe the Oregon Street corridor south of the river should be a priority for economic growth. When you cross that bridge, you can feel the potential. With the Oregon/Jackson Street bridge replacement still several years away, we have time to be intentional about what that area becomes. Instead of waiting for change to happen, we should plan ahead so that when the project is complete, the corridor is ready for new housing, small businesses, and long-term investment.

Strengthening the riverwalk and waterfront in that area should be part of that vision. The river is one of Oshkosh's greatest assets. When public spaces along the river are active and welcoming, they naturally support nearby restaurants, shops, and entrepreneurs. That's how you build vibrancy in a way that feels organic and true to the character of the south side.

The North Jackson corridor also deserves focused attention. It's one of our longest commercial corridors and already home to many businesses, but there's room for reinvestment. By following through on the corridor planning work, improving safety and accessibility, and providing clearer expectations for development, we can create the kind of environment where property owners and businesses feel confident putting down roots.

**5. It has been reported that the City of Oshkosh is considering purchasing City Center. What role do you believe the City of Oshkosh should play in the redevelopment of City Center, and how should the city approach the potential relocation of City Hall as part of its long term capital improvement planning?**

I believe any discussion about purchasing City Center must be grounded in fiscal responsibility and long-term planning. Removing a significant property from the tax base is not a small decision, and it would require a clear, publicly presented plan that demonstrates long-term value for residents, businesses, and the city as a whole.

If the City were to consider involvement, I would want to see a transparent redevelopment strategy that protects existing businesses, strengthens downtown vitality, and clearly outlines the financial impact. Relocating City Hall should only be pursued if it reduces long-term costs, supports broader redevelopment goals, and makes clear fiscal sense for Oshkosh.

This will likely be one of the most significant decisions facing the next Council, and I would not approach it lightly. I would evaluate the options thoroughly, weigh the long-term opportunities and tradeoffs, and make a decision based on what is most fiscally responsible and what best supports Oshkosh's future.

**6. Municipalities across Wisconsin are increasingly exploring Fee for Service models as a way to fund programs that have traditionally been supported through the annual property tax levy. Do you support a funding approach like this? If so, what current city services would be appropriately funded as a Fee for Service? If a new Fee for Service is imposed, should property taxpayers receive an equal, proportionate tax levy credit?**

I believe Fee for Service models should be used cautiously and transparently. Essential services that benefit the entire community, such as public safety, core infrastructure, and basic public services, are generally best funded through the property tax levy so costs are shared broadly based on property value. In Wisconsin, service fees can be structured in different ways, but they are often less tied to assessed value than the property tax levy, which can create fairness concerns.

There may be cases where user-based or specialized services are more appropriately funded through fees rather than the general levy. However, any shift in funding should be evaluated carefully, because separate service charges may fall less proportionately on residents and small businesses than value-based taxation.

If a new fee is imposed, I would support a proportionate levy adjustment where appropriate so taxpayers are not simply paying twice in a different form. Any funding shift should be clearly explained and focused on fairness, affordability, and long-term financial stability.

**7. The City created its stormwater utility in 2003 to manage runoff and comply with environmental regulations. Residential properties are charged for one Equivalent Runoff Unit (ERU), while non residential parcels pay based on the amount of impervious surface they contain. The fee has increased from \$19.10 per ERU in 2003 to \$243.84 in 2025, with a projected 1.1% increase in 2026. Do you find this rate of increase acceptable? Do you believe that similar increases over the next 20 years would be acceptable? Please share any ideas you have for controlling the long term growth of stormwater utility fees.**

Stormwater management is essential to protecting homes, businesses, and infrastructure, and it is a real responsibility of local government. Over the past two decades, costs have risen because of stricter environmental requirements, aging systems, and construction inflation. Still, an increase from \$19.10 to \$243.84 per ERU is significant, and I do not believe that level of long-term growth should simply be accepted without close scrutiny.

Going forward, I would support steady, predictable fee adjustments rather than sharp increases. Similar growth over the next 20 years would only be acceptable if it were transparent, well-justified, and tied to clearly defined infrastructure needs. To control future costs, I would prioritize preventive maintenance, strategic capital planning, outside funding opportunities, and incentives that help reduce runoff through green infrastructure. The goal should be to manage stormwater responsibly while keeping long-term costs as stable and predictable as possible.

**8. Commercial properties in Oshkosh saw an average 22% increase in assessed values in 2025 following the latest reassessment process last year. This resulted in higher tax bills for many. In your opinion, is this acceptable and what would be the best avenue for you as a city council member to communicate important issues such as this to taxpayers?**

Reassessments are meant to reflect current market value, not to generate additional revenue. At the same time, a 22% average increase is significant, and it is understandable that many business owners would feel the impact. I believe accurate assessments are important, but so is making sure the process is transparent, well-explained, and not treated as just a technical exercise without real consequences for taxpayers.

As a council member, I would focus on improving communication around reassessment cycles by clearly explaining how assessments relate to the levy, what drives changes in value, and what appeal options are available. I also believe the city should use modern, accessible communication tools so taxpayers can better understand complex financial issues and feel more informed and confident in the process.

**9. With a low unemployment rate and strong local economy, many employers report difficulty attracting and retaining talent. What role should the city play in attracting new residents and ensuring that Oshkosh remains an appealing place to live and work?**

With a strong local economy, attracting and retaining talent is about more than jobs. It is about whether people can picture a life here long term. The city plays a role by making sure Oshkosh is a place where people can find housing, feel connected to the community, and see real opportunity for themselves and their families.

That means supporting housing growth so supply keeps up with demand, investing in infrastructure and public spaces that strengthen neighborhoods, and maintaining safe, well-kept streets and parks. It also means strengthening our partnership with UW–Oshkosh so students feel connected to the broader community and see Oshkosh as a place to stay after graduation, not just a place they passed through.

From a governance perspective, the city should focus on predictable policies, efficient permitting, and clear communication so employers and developers feel confident investing here. If we want to attract the next generation of workers and residents, Oshkosh has to be competitive, welcoming, and a place where people believe they can build a future.

**10. A housing study completed for the City of Oshkosh in March 2022 projected that the city will grow by more than 3,200 residents by 2030, requiring the construction of nearly 1,700 new housing units. While Oshkosh has made meaningful progress, a significant gap remains. What do you see as the primary barriers to expanding the housing stock in Oshkosh? What steps would you take to support the development of additional workforce housing in the community?”**

The primary barriers to expanding housing in Oshkosh are rising construction costs, high interest rates, infrastructure constraints, and zoning policies that do not always reflect current demand. In many parts of the city, our zoning code was written for a different era and can make it harder to build the kinds of housing today’s workforce needs.

To support additional workforce housing, I believe we should review and modernize zoning to allow more missing-middle options, such as duplexes, townhomes, and small multi-unit buildings, in appropriate areas. These housing types can increase supply without dramatically changing neighborhood character. We should also make sure permitting processes are efficient and predictable so projects can move forward with less uncertainty and delay.

Workforce housing requires better alignment between zoning, infrastructure, and growth planning. If Oshkosh wants to remain competitive, we need to make it possible for the people who work here to also live here.

**11. If elected to the City Council, how would you support Oshkosh’s business community and help create an environment where local employers can thrive?**

Supporting Oshkosh’s business community starts with creating a city government that is clear, responsive, and easy to work with. Employers are more likely to invest and grow when policies are predictable, permitting is efficient, and long-term infrastructure planning is aligned with economic goals.

As a council member, I would prioritize modernizing city processes to reduce unnecessary delays and improve communication with businesses. That includes making zoning and land-use decisions more transparent, coordinating capital improvement planning with growth areas, and ensuring infrastructure investments support commercial corridors and future development.

The city also plays a role in workforce attraction by supporting housing growth, strengthening our partnership with UW–Oshkosh, and maintaining the quality-of-life amenities that help employers recruit and retain talent. My goal is to help create an environment where businesses feel confident growing in Oshkosh and investing here for the long term.

**12. What specific issue or challenge would you most like to address as a City Council member, and why is this issue particularly important to you?**

The challenge I am most interested in addressing is how Oshkosh prepares for the future in a thoughtful, connected way. Too often, cities make decisions reactively — responding to short-term pressures without fully aligning housing, infrastructure, economic development, and public communication around a shared long-term vision. I want Oshkosh to be more intentional than that.

This is particularly important to me because I believe the next generation of residents, workers, renters, and families will determine Oshkosh's long-term strength. If we want people to stay here, build careers here, and put down roots here, we must make sure the city is planning and communicating clearly. That means not only making smart investments but also helping residents understand where the city is going and how they fit into that future.

I would bring a forward-looking perspective to the Council, with a strong focus on modernization, public communication, and preparing Oshkosh to remain competitive, welcoming, and financially stable for the long term. The decisions we make now will shape the kind of city people will still want to live in 10, 20, and 30 years from now.