

**Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce
Candidate Questionnaire**

2023 Spring Election – Oshkosh City Council

1. Please provide some personal background information.
 - a. Karl Buelow
 - b. Non-Profit Operations Management, Day by Day Warming Shelter
 - c. Transit Advisory Board, Feeding America Eastern WI Food Leaders Lab

2. What are your background and qualifications for this City council position and what value will you bring to the City Council personally?

My degree from UW-Oshkosh is a Bachelor of Liberal Studies with an Emphasis on Leadership Development. This degree is focused on conflict resolution and mitigation and collaboration. The last decade of my career has been focused on hospitality and non-profit management.

3. Please outline what you consider to be the City of Oshkosh's 3 most critical issues.

Too few housing units, especially at the lower end of the budget spectrum.
Special assessments are a painful system to pay for street repairs.
Rising rates of homelessness and substance abuse disorders.

4. What are the biggest challenges the city faces currently and in the next 5 years? What should the city do to respond and overcome these challenges?

Replacing city manager – Council must be proactively working to develop process to select next city manager to be ready for when Mark retires.

Shortage of housing units – City must explore creative solutions of multi-use properties, Accessory dwelling units, multi-family units, and tiny home options.

5. Previous City Councils have considered proposals to change the policy on how to fund the current street improvement and sidewalk replacement program. Past proposals included establishing a Transportation Utility Fee Program or a Transportation Assessment Replacement Fee as a means to eliminate special assessments for street reconstruction/improvement projects and the sidewalk replacement program. Do you support this type of a program? If so, what should be the basis to establish a transportation fee? Please discuss your position.

I support TARF (transportation assessment replacement fee) as a means to eliminate special assessments. In general I am in favor of the TARF system and

calculation system used in Neenah. Equivalent runoff unit calculations are used to establish each citizens portion.

6. Municipalities across the State are moving to Fee for Service approaches to pay for the delivery of municipal services that were otherwise funded by 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 tax payers receive an equal, proportionate tax levy credit?

Community safety and social safety net services are options that all Oshkosh community members need access to and should stay funded through the tax levy. Currently there are fee for services for usage such as our individual water bills. I would be open to evaluating programs that could be moved to Fee for Services. In this evaluation I would be careful to ensure that venerable community members do not lose access to services.

7. The City established a Storm Water Utility in 2003 for the purposes of managing storm water run-off issues in the community. Residential property owners are assessed for one equivalent runoff unit (ERU). Non-residential property owners are assessed annual fees based on the amount of impervious space (parking lots and roof tops) to determine the amount of ERUs that exists on a parcel. The initial (annual) storm water utility fee in 2003 was \$19.10 per ERU and has grown to \$237.72 per ERU in 2023. Do you find this rate of increase acceptable? Do you believe that continued rates of increases at that level over the next 20 years is acceptable? Please outline any ideas you might have to curtail the growth in storm water utility fees.

To ask a question that focusses only on the cost per ERU over the last 20 years is vastly misleading. After the massive storm water system failure in 2008, major improvements and updating needed to occur, and did. These projects will continue over the next 20 years and the investments will incur costs to fund them.

8. With a low unemployment rate and strong local economy, many employers are reporting difficulty in attracting and retaining talent. What is the role of the city in attracting people to Oshkosh an ensuring that Oshkosh is an attractive place to live and work.

One of the reasons that potential talent has given for not choosing opportunities is the lack of housing options. The city must continue to seek and enact policies that allow for the development (redevelopment, revitalization) of housing units at various price points so that Oshkosh can be an attractive place to live

9. The State of Wisconsin currently imposes levy limits on local municipalities, but allows for levy increases based on new development. Do you support the continuation of this? Should there be modifications? Should this be repealed? Please discuss.

I do not have the information and data required to provide a wise answer for this question. I would seek advice from a variety of tax and funding experts.