

**Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce
Candidate Questionnaire**

2023 Spring Election – Oshkosh Mayor

1. Please provide some personal background information.

a. **Name:** Matt Mugerauer

b. **Occupation:** Operations Manager at 4imprint

c. **List any community activities you are involved with:**

I am the current Deputy Mayor (2 years) and in my third term on City Council having been elected in 2018 and re-elected in 2020 and 2022. I chair the city's Long Range Finance Committee, have previously chaired the Rental Housing Advisory Board, served on the Landmarks Commission and Public Arts & Beautification Committee.

As a lifelong resident of Oshkosh, I have deep ties to my community. I am a member of the Oshkosh Mid-Morning Kiwanis, an organization that I connected with through their global purpose - changing the world, one child and one community at a time. I have served as a youth sports coach for the Oshkosh West Basketball Club, Oshkosh Youth Soccer Club and Oshkosh Fast Club Softball.

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

I have served on the City Council for five years, the last two as Deputy Mayor, am an Operations Manager for one of Oshkosh's best places to work 4imprint and lifelong resident of Oshkosh.

I have great respect for the roles of City Council and Mayor. The Mayor's main function is to effectively and respectfully run our City Council meetings.

As Mayor I'll continue to bring the same passion for making Oshkosh a great place to live, work and play as I have as a Council Member. As a leader in the community, I find it important to be accessible and engaged in the community.

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

Budget: The most important issue facing the City of Oshkosh is our financials, our budget. Anything we want to do in terms of improvements to our infrastructure, parks and quality of life assets, public safety and transit all come back to our budget and how we pay for them. The continued reduction in state aid only increases the amount we need to bring in via taxes and fees to just maintain our current level of service.

While serving on our Long Range Finance Committee I have positively contributed to our debt reduction goals and will continue to do so.

Infrastructure: We have many needs in this community: infrastructure improvements including roads and utilities, facility needs for the Parks Department, City Hall, the Police and Fire Departments and the Museum.

We must find a way to support our needs and growth, while balancing the need to lower our debt, and not exceed limits placed on us by the State. It is a balancing act, one that I enjoy and am effectively helping lead us through.

As a council member every single taxpayer dollar we are entrusted with is important, and I will continue to ask the important questions to ensure we are getting as much bang for our buck as possible.

Housing: The City of Oshkosh does not have enough housing available. Over the last few years, we have seen increased attention by developers to build higher density housing in the downtown central city area, and most recently the west side of town, but we continue to need more single-family homes. While the Common Council and the City are not in the real estate business, and for good reason, we need to encourage single family construction. I have advocated for City Staff to consider alternative options, to be flexible and adaptable to different ideas to allow residential developers to keep Oshkosh moving forward, and I will continue to do so.

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?

Finances: Our single greatest challenge is how to pay for the things we need and the things we want. As previously mentioned, we have many facilities and infrastructure needs in Oshkosh that need addressing. Balancing paying down debt, taking on new projects, while keeping taxes as low as possible will continue to be our greatest challenge. It will take strong responsible leadership, which I have shown over the last five years as a council member.

Housing: As a community we must continue to grow. Oshkosh has very limited housing available. And if we want those who come here to work and learn, we have to have sufficient housing choices available. I'll continue to support new housing initiatives.

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 a change to our special assessments policy to ensure those that are most vulnerable, homeowners and small business owners, no longer take on the lion share of

the burden. Having spearheaded this issue during my first term on council, I will continue to advocate for a better, more equitable policy. Having met with business owners on numerous occasions over the last several years, I have had the opportunity to listen to their individual concerns and not surprising to me, they align with the concerns of homeowners. I understand big businesses such as large manufacturers can easily handle a large assessment bill from the city, and I respect their ability to do so. But just because they can, doesn't mean they should have too. And the same goes for the small business owners from Oregon St to Oshkosh Ave. Most small businesses do not have the ability to pay for large assessments for improvements to the roads in front of their properties. Roads that we all use and benefit from.

I appreciate the Chamber's role advocating for its membership, and I look forward to working together to find something that we can agree will help Oshkosh continue to be a great place to live, work and invest.

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?

With strict revenue and expenditure limits imposed on municipalities by the state, we've had to get creative to just maintain our current level of service. There is a time and place for fees, especially for circumstance when someone exclusively benefits from a service.

I have continually advocated for lower fees. Such as my strong opposition to Special Events fees, that impact the Farmers Market and Waterfest, and will continue to advocate for limiting their impact. I've supported waiving of liquor license fees during covid to help many of our small businesses during such a tough time.

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.

Storm Water Utility rates have gone up steadily over the last almost 20 years, but that coincides with significant work on our storm sewer system - to alleviate as much flooding of homes and businesses as possible when we have heavy weather events. I think we can agree the entire community has benefited from the projects those fees paid for. Recent analysis shows Storm Water Utility rates stabilizing as our larger projects taper off and we move into smaller targeted projects and maintaining the system. I've advocated for our Long Range Finance Committee to become more engaged in our Storm Water Utility budgeting process to ensure we have robust citizen input. And I recently supported using significant fund balance (cash) to reduce the rate increase required to support this next year's projects.

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 and ensuring that Oshkosh is an attractive place to live and work.

Making Oshkosh a great place to live, work, play and invest is at the heart of why I am a City Council Member. Our role is simple and complex at the same time.

- Create an environment that is welcoming to business, allowing us to attract and retain.
 - Ensuring we have strong quality of life assets, such as our parks, waterfront access and events that are welcoming.
 - Supporting housing initiatives to ensure those that want to work here can live here too.
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.

It can be easy to just say yes, and not be critical when making decisions regarding tax dollars. I do believe the current levy limit system requires officials to make good, sound financial decisions come budget time.

But this issue is about local control versus state control. As a local elected official, I am responsible to the voters of Oshkosh. And I strongly believe we should be able to control our own destiny, based upon the needs expressed by our community. Madison has chosen to limit our ability to address the needs of this community.