

- 1A) Robert Wilcox
- B) Retired Third Party Administrator
- C) I coach youth soccer for Oshkosh Youth Soccer Club

2) Here is the outline of what I think are the three most critical issues to consider for the City of Oshkosh.

1) Eliminating special assessments. Everyone uses the sidewalks and streets. Replacing roads and sidewalks should be included in the tax. This should not be assigned to the property owner.

2) Affordable housing. If government subsidies used then there should be residency requirements. Also increase the supply of residential units by changing ordinances.

3) Forcing the city to be more efficient with how it spends taxpayer money. The expense side of the budget should be addressed as well as the income side of the budget. Only the income side of the budget seems to be addressed.

3) No, I do not support a Transportation Utility Fee Program. As I grew up learning about civics in school my first thought on governments charging fees for things was that it was wrong unless the citizen is getting something tangible in their hand. In my opinion this is why we pay taxes. When the taxes are paid the government should not be coming back to the citizens and asking for more money. The government should charge enough tax to cover all of the expenses for each year, or cut from the budget the amount of the special assessment each year so there are no special assessments each year.

I do acknowledge fee's are appropriate for the government to charge, but generally speaking I do not like fee's and for this issue I am not in favor of charging a fee to cover these costs. My solution to this is that the council should find ways to save money in the budget each year and use that savings to pay for street improvements, and sidewalk replacement program. One solution regarding the sidewalk replacement program is to prevent the city from being extremely picky on replacing slabs of sidewalk. If there is one crack in the slab of sidewalk the city should not be replacing it. One example I have regarding this was a few years ago a friend of mine who lived at 914 Otter had to pay for a sidewalk slab to be replaced that had one little crack in the corner of the slab. If the city would not be allowed to be picky like this how many fewer sidewalk slabs would be needed to be replaced each year? Would this reduce the number of sidewalk slabs to be replaced to a level where the city of Oshkosh could just pay for the replacements without charging additional tax money.

Another example of the city being to picky with sidewalk replacement is when one slab of sidewalk has to high of a rise from one slab to the next. The city could grind down the higher slab so that both slabs are flush.

In my opinion there is no basis to establish a transportation fee. My solution is for the City of Oshkosh to get its financial house in order.

4) I do not support moving to a Fee for Service approach. If a municipality covers the service with taxes then I would conclude/argue that it is not a service. Secondly, what is a service? Are municipalities changing the definition so they can charge a fee? I think municipalities are trying to charge fees anywhere they can to avoid the issue of no taxation without representation. I also think the solution to these problems is fiscal responsibility and not paying government employees extravagantly. The highest paid city employee should be paid no more than 6 times the lowest paid citizen of Oshkosh.

5) I do not believe in this fee. Who is to say all the water from impervious space makes it into the storm drain. Being a lifelong resident of the Oshkosh area I have witnessed Oshkosh come up with policies to get more money from its citizens rather than managing its expenses appropriately. I do not believe this increase is reasonable. My outline to curtail the growth in stormwater utility fees would be to get rid of this fee and demand that the water utility manages its expenses better. There are two sides to the equation and they are revenue and expenses. I only ever hear the revenue side of the equation being addressed and I would like to have the expense side addressed.

6) The "dark store" loophole is not appropriate. With my understanding of the dark store loophole commercial property owners would not have their properties disproportionately assessed. My knowledge of this loophole is limited and I am open to having my opinion changed with new facts presented to me.

I would say that if municipalities would fix their spending issues they would not have any problems with revenue. As for fairness local governments are not fair in their assessing of properties. Last local governments should not be in charge of assessing. This is because the employee should not be in charge of the revenue that comes into the organization that pays their salary.

1. 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.

7.) With the status quo being as it is I agree with these levy limits. This is because Wisconsin was once the leading state for in what it charged for property tax. The levy limit has done its job because Wisconsin is now in the middle of the pack when it comes to what the state charges for property tax. As long as the status quo stays the same then the levy limit needs to stay to protect taxpayers from paying way too much in property tax.

The levy is ok because it prevents the people who receive the tax money from putting the tax high through subjective assessing. They are essentially making their paycheck higher.

How to change the status quo:

- 1) Local governments need to be willing to spend less rather than looking on how to spend more every year. There are some acceptable expenses that can be increased from year to year such as employee wages to cover inflation and insurance costs. Local governments need to learn how to be efficient with money like businesses are efficient with their money.. When we as a society can have confidence that the local governments can be efficient with the money they receive from taxes then the levy law can be repealed.
- 2) Another way to change the status quo is to do away with assessments. The levy is there because local governments will assess property values highly beyond reason to gain a tax increase. The levy is there to prevent property taxes from sky rocketing.
- 3) Why are we only considering property taxes to fund local municipalities? Why should property owners be the only ones to bear the burden of funding local municipalities.