

The BeaconNews

Candidate Questionnaire

If the economy continues on its current path, what would you like the city to do to reduce spending?

First I feel that as citizens of Aurora **WE** must evaluate what **OUR** priorities for this city and its future should be! We must ensure that the path of development in Aurora going forward will not further burden the taxpayers with great debt as it already has. Over the last few years **Aurora's city budget has had a huge increase** due in large part to costly projects which this city has implemented. These projects have been financed with bonds secured by our tax dollars and casino revenues. We have continued to see an increase in the tax dollars and service fees we pay to accommodate our increased budget. With the downturn of our economy and foreclosures on the rise we could very well see our tax revenues decrease substantially, this along with our already decreased casino revenues could cause a significant deficit in our tight budget. Aurora's taxpayers would be greatly impacted in the years to come if we cannot find ways to reduce our spending as well as reduce the substantial debt we have accumulated!

We need to re-evaluate current spending and costs on existing projects, such as our new police station, finding ways to cut down on expenses without lowering the quality of work. With the downturn in our economy it would be wise to begin renegotiating our current contracts with all vendors of these projects asking for sizable reductions. We must also re-evaluate other projects, such as the River's Edge Park, which may be in the beginning phases of implementation. Projects such as these will cost the taxpayers millions more placing us further in debt.

We then should continue this process of cost renegotiation with every other vendor our city government utilizes in its ongoing functions. Vendors must understand that increased competition in this economy is a driving force in the renegotiation process. Rather than risk current and future business with the city it would be in the best interest of most vendors to be flexible to our needs.

Incorporate vendor consistency across all factions of city business. By incorporating a one vendor approach for things such as office supplies, computer systems, or internet services we could negotiate much a much better cost savings overall.

Evaluate and streamline internal processes and work functions eliminating redundancy between departments. This would increase efficiency throughout city government and raise productivity levels where needed.

These are but a few ways this city can reduce spending but it will take the efforts of all city government working together for the best interest of Aurora to make this happen!

Please list a few ways you would encourage new businesses to locate to Aurora. Do you believe financial incentives, such as tax rebates, are a good tool for commercial development, or should they be used sparingly?

If we can significantly reduce city spending and debt we may have options in bringing down our inflated sales tax rates providing incentives for businesses to locate in Aurora. We also need to continue to improve upon the competitive advantages this city already has to offer businesses when encouraging them to locate here.

Our strategic location provides a logistical advantage for all business industries. We need to work on providing ease of access from I-88 to Aurora's downtown and southern regions. Improving the condition of major roads and the flow of traffic would help to overcome transportation obstacles that hinder growth in these areas.

Although there is still building capacity in the outer regions of Aurora we need to work on improving existing resources and areas throughout the city repositioning them as assets. Focus on ways to reduce crime, improve safety and economical ways to redevelop neighborhoods. Let's work in bringing businesses and residents together to help find ways to overcome challenges that these areas face.

Focus on strategies which will promote workforce development among our adult residents. Also work in conjunction with our school districts to ensure a strong k-12 educational system for our children. Education strengthens the economy, provides a quality workforce, and produces future leaders who can deal with the complex issues that will face our communities.

Provide a one-stop shop for all business locating to Aurora large or small. Provide a process that will not allow for stop gaps in different departments causing businesses to lengthen their timeframes.

As for financial incentives I believe if used appropriately they can be useful tool in certain cases, but we should not continue to burden on the taxpayers to compensate for select business ventures. Economic growth in certain areas of this city didn't just deteriorate overnight it took some time to do. It will take more than just giving outrageous incentives to developers in an effort to promote rapid growth in these areas to overcome these issues.

How do you feel the \$580,000 per year ward funds should be spent by aldermen? Would you support a cap on non-infrastructure-related expenses?

The question here really should be why are infrastructure repairs included as part of our ward funds? All infrastructure repairs should have their own fund or should be included under another fund that is city wide. Allocating ward funds dedicated to infrastructure under a separate fund solely for that purpose would allow consistency throughout Aurora on repairs and upgrades. I think that would a more reasonable solution. Until that becomes an option then I believe a majority of these funds should be spent on

infrastructure repairs and upgrades in each ward. There must be a process put forward to ensure ward funds are used primarily towards infrastructure. I would support a cap on non- infrastructure expenses, we should be considerate with our tax dollars and make them count where they are needed most.

How important are ward committees? How do you, or would you, organize your committee and run it?

Ward committees are essential to building strong communities, without interaction with the people of this city how are we to know what their priorities truly are? Interactive communication is essential and needs to be a part of the foundation of this city. With that being said as an Alderman At Large I would work together with ward aldermen and their committees to address quality of life issues such as infrastructure repairs, neighborhood safety/development, and crime reduction. I would also help to fill gaps where additional representation may be needed in our community. It should be the function of an Alderman At Large to work together with all ward aldermen in communicating and helping the citizens with issues that need to be addressed.

Do you think the City Council has enough check-and-balance power on the mayor's office? Why or why not? If not, what can be done about it?

I do not feel that they do, many of our city council members do not ask many in-depth questions or deny much of what our current administration sets before them. There are only a few on our city council that regularly speak out on behalf of the citizens. This allows too much power to government and not enough to the people!

It is the responsibility of our city council to be the check and balance system we need it to be! To ensure our city administration is both fiscally and ethically responsible, representing our best interests in all that they do as council members. We need to put this power back into city council's hands by electing into council people who will question everything, speak out on behalf of the citizens and to say no when needed.

Citywide, what are your top three specific priorities?

Fiscal responsibility- irresponsible spending has been allowed, a great amount of debt has been accumulated, and the taxpayers of this city will be paying for it over the next 30 years! Can Aurora continue to afford to live beyond our means? We need to cut spending, reduce costs, and eliminate debt!

Government Transparency- The lack of information provided to our citizens regarding city business is unacceptable. We must push for an honest, open and transparent city government! One that will value our input and make decisions representing our best interest! Interactive communication with the citizens of Aurora is a must!

Economic development- Promote development that brings a true value to the citizens throughout Aurora as well to the educational districts. Continue to improve upon our

advantages and reposition resources as assets throughout the city for all around growth. Work together with businesses and residents to reduce crime and promote neighborhood revitalization.

What's working well in Aurora these days? What's not?

What is:

Community Oriented Policing- The involvement of C.O.P. officers throughout our city has brought a significant change in our neighborhoods and around our schools. Working together with community residents and city representatives to overcome the ongoing issues of crime in our city has been a task that they work hard to do. Those involved in neighborhood committees work hand in hand with our officers to find ways to make our community safer for all. We need to continue to build interactive neighborhood committees; these play a huge role in overcoming the issues of crime and promote neighborhood development. We must recognize the efforts of all who are involved in working to overcome crime and promote safety in our city. They are diligent in all which they do and are making a big difference in Aurora!

What's not:

Fiscal responsibility- irresponsible spending has been allowed, a great amount of debt has been accumulated, and the taxpayers of this city will be paying for it over the next 30 years! Can Aurora continue to afford to live beyond our means? We need to cut spending, reduce costs, and eliminate debt!

Government Transparency- The lack of information provided to our citizens regarding city business is unacceptable. We must push for an honest, open and transparent city government! One that will value our input and make decisions representing our best interest! Interactive communication with the citizens of Aurora is a must!

For everyone but the incumbent – Why should voters choose you over the incumbent? For the incumbent – Why should you be re-elected over the challengers?

Candidate non- incumbent:

The citizens of Aurora work hard for all that we have which is why we put a great value on fiscal responsibility from our elected officials. We put our trust in them to manage our tax dollars wisely, a responsibility which should never be taken lightly! But we must ask ourselves have they truly managed our tax dollars as they should have? Were they frugal with our money, spending with our priorities in mind? Did they look ahead weighing how this great amount of debt would affect us, the taxpayers, in the long run? Did they realize how it may impact our children, the next generation of taxpayers to come?

Like many of you I question if our priorities, our best interest and our concerns were being fully represented when many of these financial decisions were made. In the end what will the citizens of Aurora have to show for all that was spent? For most of us there is no question that we cannot allow this cycle of spending and borrowing to continue being the rule rather than the exception!

We need, in our city council, representatives who will be watchful of every dollar being spent and will not allow our city to “live beyond its means”! As we face these turbulent economic times it is up to us, the citizens of Aurora, to bring change to city council. To elect those who will best represent our priorities and always act in our best interests!

It is for these many reasons that I became a candidate in the Alderman At Large election, to work together with you to bring a much needed change to government in Aurora. As Alderman At Large I will work diligently to help make city council what we the citizens of Aurora need it to be! A city council that will take back the power as a check and balance system for our city government! A city council that will put the people’s priorities first before everything else! A city council that will question everything, speak out on behalf of the citizens and to say no when needed! A city council that will push for government transparency allowing the people to know exactly what is taking place in our city government! A city council which promotes economic development that will provide a true value to the citizens and not bring further financial burden on the taxpayers! A city council that will diligently seek ways to interactively communicate with the people of Aurora on a continuous basis and not only during election seasons!

Let us work together to bring this much needed change about, to make the business of government the people’s business again!

