



WINONA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2022 CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

County Board

Dwayne Voegeli - District 2 Candidate

- 1. What should the Winona County EDA (Economic Development Authority) be doing to support and increase private sector business development/job creation?**

I am a strong supporter of the County EDA. I helped form the County EDA. The EDA needs dedicated staff time to run its programs. Cutting this program is penny wise and pound foolish.

- 2. How do you define the role of the County Board of Commissioners verses the role of paid County staff?**

The role of the County Board is to be watchdogs of taxpayer dollars and to serve the citizens of Winona County. County Commissioners do this through oversight and asking questions. We need to let the staff do its work. However, there are times for Commissioners to be informed and involved in different decisions.

- 3. What should the County Board be doing to support and promote agribusiness in Winona County?**

I was raised on a fourth generation dairy farm. Farmers are the hardest working and most underpaid people in the country. Not all farming is the same. There is a difference between people who own their land and control their own destiny versus operations that are fronts for large corporations. More needs to be done to support family farms. This includes support at the County, State, and Federal levels. We can't solve this problem in isolation in Winona County.

- 4. How should the County Board of Commissioners balance the rights of private property owners and current/future county regulations?**

The word, "balance," is incredibly important. Property owners have very important rights. At the same time, the long term impacts on the water, soil, air, and the community also need to be considered.

5. What should be the role of Winona County Government in working with townships and municipalities for growing private sector jobs?

Traditionally, cities take the lead on these issues. But there is a time and place for County government to get involved. The County is more likely to see the big picture.

6. What do you see as the County's role in job creation and economic development?

First of all, listen to business owners, especially small and medium sized business owners. The County EDA and Comprehensive Plan should play a role in helping create sustainable and living wage jobs.

7. Where do you stand on possible future pandemic mitigations? How would you balance having a vibrant local economy while maintaining a safe community?

I really didn't like wearing a mask. I loathed it. At the same time, it was a necessary evil. We were dealing with a new kind of global pandemic. Over one million Americans died from this new disease. In hindsight, some policies were not needed, or needed as long. But in the beginning of this process no one knew for sure. When in doubt, we need to err on the side of protecting human lives.

8. The recent jail project is a significant expenditure for the County, what steps do you believe need to be done to ensure this ongoing debt will not be a detriment for business and economic development in Winona County?

Whenever possible, the funding should not come from property taxes. The quarter cent sales tax is the best way to make this happen. The State Legislature allowed short term politics to get in the way of important funding for local governments all across Minnesota. The State and Federal governments impose all kinds of rules and requirements on County jails. These additional requirements should also come with additional State and Federal funding.

9. Many communities across the state have seen many public safety officers leave or retire early from their positions. These same communities are having difficulty re-filling these positions due to negative public perceptions and lack of funding. What steps do you believe need to be taken to ensure that our community's law enforcement is adequately funded and supported so that our community remains safe and healthy?

Teachers and law enforcement face many of the same challenges. Underfunding. Unrealistic expectations. A lack of respect. Politicians using them as scapegoats. Being blamed for all the problems of society when they are the ones who have to deal with the problems on a daily basis. Both professions need more respect and more funding.