

## QUESTIONS FOR COUNTY BOARD CANDIDATES

### **The moderator will invite each candidate to offer a personal introduction**

Tell us a little bit about yourself – your name, where you live, what you are passionate about and what experiences or skills you have that would enhance your position as a Supervisor on the County Board) **and answer:** What are your top **three priorities** for the County Board to focus on in the next two years? (two minutes)

*First, I would like to thank the League of Women Voters for allowing me to engage in this manner. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend, as I had a previously scheduled vacation out of town. My name is Denise Shirley-Carter, and I live in Hudson, Red Cedar Canyon, which is District 7. I'm most passionate about my family, and my cats, but also teaching Group Fitness at the Y, because it is just another way that I can give back to the community that I love. I moved here 25+ years ago, and really don't want to live anywhere else. In my full time job, I am an Accountant at a professional services firm in the Twin Cities, which I feel truly can help me to be able to jump in and help on the Board where I am needed most.*

*My top three priorities for my service on the County Board would be to contribute to budgeting discussions while continuing to deepen my understanding of that process, hopefully to engage with upcoming Parks and Recreation initiatives, and to help support the needs of the ADRC.*

**The questions will be drawn at random for each candidate. Each candidate will have a chance to answer three different questions. Below are the seven possible questions for the March 10th "Meet and Greet".**

1. There are several Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in St. Croix County. Many have applied to expand the number of livestock with the DNR. What is your position with regard to CAFOs? (two minutes)

*This is a huge concern in the rural parts of our county, but I will admit that I don't know a lot about it, since I have always lived in the city of Hudson. While researching this, I understood it to be in regards to large agricultural companies wanting to expand their livestock in order to increase their future output and profits. While it's understandable that they would want to do that, it is critical that we also take into account the needs of the local residents, their families, their health, the groundwater, as well as humane treatment of the animals. I believe there needs to be a balance between all those things, before any expansion can happen. The residents should feel safe with the environment they*

*live and work in, and shouldn't have their health at risk simply for living in the same area as one of these operations.*

2. The land and water conservation staff have identified the primary source of contamination of ground and surface waters as excessive nitrates found in manure and chemicals used on cropland. What measures should the county take to inform and protect residents from the harmful effects of excessive nitrates? How would you encourage preservation of individuals' safe well water and farmland for agricultural use in this County? (two minutes)

*This is a complex issue that I haven't had the opportunity to research much yet. With regards to informing residents, if that is something that the county board decides to do, I think it will take a multi-pronged approach to reach the appropriate parties, but due to the potential for harm to the community it's critical to cover as many areas as possible.*

3. What can the County Board do to assist local town and village boards and city councils as they seek to provide not only affordable housing, but also a variety of housing options in their municipalities? (two minutes)

*This is a real problem in St. Croix County. As a suburb of the Twin Cities, we need to have options for everyone, and so much of the county is either single family homes (starting at upwards of \$300K) or rural housing. With a coordinated effort, we should be able to entice builders to create communities that will be inclusive to all income levels, and not just the people who have a higher than median income. However, as affordable housing is incorporated into the area, we also need to make sure to include more options for transportation. For such a large community to have no public transportation options creates additional barriers for those who need affordable housing.*

4. Xcel Energy has proposed a large solar facility on nearly 3,000 acres in central St. Croix County. Projects of this size are under the jurisdiction of the Public Utility Commission of Wisconsin. What role do you feel the county should play in this project? (two minutes)

*If I am understanding the proposal correctly, the St Croix County Board does not have much say in the project, but the PUC does. However, in order to help protect the interests of the residents, I think it's important to stay informed, and keep a dialogue with Xcel Energy and the PUC. We can let them know our concerns, and comments from the residents, but ultimately, we can simply be an advisory board and ensure we keep open communication with all parties.*

5. St. Croix County has grown in population in recent decades, driven in large part by our proximity to the Twin Cities. Over the next decade, growth is expected to flatten and potentially decline. What are the impacts of this shift in population as it relates to the county? (two minutes)

*If the population begins to decline, it could impact all services provided by St Croix County, from roads to property taxes to social services. However, as we add potential for affordable housing, transportation, and if we are able to bring*

*more higher wage positions into the county, we may be able to see this flatten rather than decline.*

6. In the next year, the County will consider expansion of the jail and other infrastructure projects, expected at a cost of \$46 million. If passed, this would result in a bond issue to the taxpayers. What is your position on the proposed expansion of the jail and infrastructure improvements? (two minutes)

*As we continue to grow as a county, and with the population continuing to increase, we will see a need for more infrastructure projects, and higher costs. I would like to see us look for grants, whether federal or state, before putting a bond before taxpayers, but it may still be necessary. The projects will need to be prioritized based on immediate need, but keeping an eye on the effects on residents is crucial. We are their eyes and ears, and it's important that they have a say in how and when we grow, and possibly put a bond in front of them.*

7. How would you address potential cuts to federal funding for health care and social services? (two minutes)

*As our population ages and we have more families moving into the area, we will need additional health care and social services options at all levels of income. This is a priority that will need to be addressed, because our residents expect to have these things available to them. Continuing to pursue grants, possible mergers, or other partnership opportunities in those areas may help us to address these issues. But cutting just isn't an option that we should be considering. The population needs those services.*