



**County Commission Voting Guide &  
Voter Information**

**"All politics is  
local."**

- Thomas P. O'Neill

## **Table of Contents**

### **Pages**

<b>County Commission District 7</b>	<b>Page 3-8</b>
<b>County Commission District 8</b>	<b>Page 9-14</b>
<b>County Commission District 9</b>	<b>Page 15-18</b>
<b>County Commission District 10</b>	<b>Page 19-20</b>
<b>County Commission District 11</b>	<b>Page 21-24</b>
<b>County Commission District 12</b>	<b>Page 25-28</b>

# BERT CHALFANT

DISTRICT 7

Email Address: [chalfanttravelservices@comcast.net](mailto:chalfanttravelservices@comcast.net)

Phone: (615)210-6224-

- Political Experience: 32 years on County Commissioner
- Education: BA Degree in Business
- Retired US Army Reserve



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Retired
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: First Presbyterian Church of Nashville
- How Long Have You Lived in Williamson County? 35 years

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?**

I have already served 32 years. Have several projects in process. Want to insure their completion. Specifically construction at Brentwood High & Middle. The STEM Building.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?**

**How do you communicate with your constituents and when are you available to meet?**

I am available 24/7. I communicate daily with other commissioners

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** We have been meeting monthly with the Brentwood City commissioners. Commercial and Private should share. Further the cities have also shared.

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** We have done just that. I would need to research the lease issue. In this area that has not been done. Moody's AAA rating cannot be compromised. This is the limit.

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas to you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?** Maintain the Moody AAA rating. That is the limit.

# BERT CHALFANT

DISTRICT 7

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?** We already do this. It is on the County Web Page.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?**

Stay with the limits of the Moody AAA Bond rating.

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**

No

# CHRIS RICHARDS

## DISTRICT 7



- Email Address: ElectCRichards@gmail.com
- Phone: 615-370-1087
- Education: BABS Degree
- Political Experience: Member Republican Party Chairmans Circle

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Stay @ home parent
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: Board Member Nashville Football Club, PTO C0-Chair
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? 15 years

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?** I was most motivated by the lack of planning I currently see from our District 7 County Commissioners. Neither of them are willing to acknowledge that being \$600 Million in debt is a big red flag that our county has a spending problem. I have lived debt-free and understand the freedom and flexibility that it gives you. If my city, my church and my household can live debt-free, then I want to help my county to realize all the benefits of living within its means.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?** Taxes

**Have you attended County Commission meetings or work sessions, researched the duties and responsibilities of a County Commissioner, and talked to other elected officials about what your role and time commitments would be as a Commissioner?** Yes, I have attended some County Commission meetings and the Brentwood City Commission meetings. I have spoken with County and City Commissioners at length before committing to my candidacy because I wanted to make sure I had the time and temperament to hold elected office. I have great mentors in Ken Travis and Mark Gorman who I turn to for advice. Being a full-time father to 3 teenagers, my work day is flexible so I know I can make time to meet with constituents during the day, or in the evening. I prefer face-to-face meetings or phone calls, and will also be available via electronic means (email, social media, etc.) to keep the lines of communication open. Listening and understanding residents' concerns is of great importance in being a successful public servant.

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** For the city of Brentwood, and my constituents, we are in a unique position in that Brentwood is dedicated to strategic planning and cooperation. I don't want to abuse the City Commissioners' generosity by continually asking them to fund the county budget shortfalls. I believe that city and county leaders need to work together to manage growth and determine how best to pay for growth. Ideally, growth pays for growth.

# CHRIS RICHARDS

DISTRICT 7

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** I support looking at all ideas for sharing the cost of growth. I want to make sure that residents who have lived and worked here, believing in Williamson County before we were so popular, can afford to stay here. I think we first and foremost need to recognize that we have a spending problem, and stop working on ways to spend more money (for example an indoor sports complex), until we get our debt under control and have a plan for getting out of debt. The ability to prove we can pay down this debt will give us more flexibility in what we can do with our revenue.

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas to you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?** This is exactly what scares me so much about our current District 7 Commissioners. This example illustrates why I am so concerned about our current debt load. Any candidate who ignores this is doing a disservice to our residents. What household could afford to allocate 21% of their household income to interest payments?

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?** I think the entire budget and checkbook register should be fully transparent. Taxpayers should have the right to understand exactly where each dollar is spent.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?** Each department head should review their annual budget and make recommendations for cutting costs. That may mean that services will need to be prioritized and some may be reduced in the short term, or supplemented by private enterprises. The teams spending the tax dollars are in the best position to help figure out solutions to saving money. Once these recommendations are received by the Commissioners, they should be open for debate and discussion. The feasibility study by the Sports Authority for an indoor recreation center is a perfect example of a nice to have vs. a need to have. One thing is clear, we can't afford to keep doing what we are doing. Something has to change.

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**  
Yes

# JENNIFER LUTERAN

## DISTRICT 7

- Email Address: VoteLuteran@gmail.com
- Phone: 615-308-5400
- Political Experience: Ran for School Board in 2016
- Education: B.S. Accounting & Law Degree



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Stay at home Mom
  - Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: Brentwood United Methodist Church; longstanding and active member of the Williamson County Republican Party and the Republican Women of Williamson County; volunteer at "Shower Up"; member of Edmondson Elementary PTO and an active volunteer at Brentwood Middle.
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? Since 2001

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?** I ran for a position on the School Board 2 years ago. During that campaign, I knocked on 2500 doors and was able to meet and have discussions with many of the residents of District 7. I learned through that process that people's areas of concern do not necessarily have to do with the day to day activities of the schools, but rather how are we going to pay for these schools, along with our infrastructure, jails, EMS, etc. It was after the election for school board was over that I started planning my campaign to run for County Commission because I felt like I had a good grasp on what a huge segment of my district was concerned about. I feel like I am the perfect candidate to take those concerns to the County level and be the resident's advocate. I have a law degree and was in the legal field for many years before deciding to stay home and raise a family. I have many years of mediation experience so I feel that I am well qualified to help make sure that the County Commissioners work well together to come to solutions that everyone likes. I also majored in Accounting and Business in College so I am able to review budgets and make informed decisions as to their content. Lastly, being a stay at home mom gives me the ability to have the time to meet with my constituents and promptly respond to their concerns.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?** Taxes

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** I would encourage monthly summits where representatives from the schools, elected City officials and elected County officials get together to talk about development requests. As it stands right now, there is no accountability from anyone and we can all see where that has got us. There has to be a better system put into place whereby the Cities, the Schools and the County work together to approve and fund our growth. I believe the biggest challenge facing Williamson County at this time is that growth is outpacing our revenue. I believe that growth has got to start paying for itself and that everyone has to pay their fair share. However, the cost of this growth should not be put entirely on the back of the taxpayers. Our business community can do a lot more to help pay for some of the costs associated with our schools. The business community brings a lot of families to Williamson County while using the quality of our school system to aid in their recruiting. It is time that these same businesses do more to offset some of the costs associated with building and operating the schools. With additional families comes additional revenue. We also have the potential of collecting a large sum of money if we prevail in collecting the Builder Impact Fees. This will certainly help with the shortfall but we are going to need more to help offset the cost of growth. I promise to look at all other means of revenue before voting for any type of tax increase. This includes, but is not limited to, raising the yearly price of the rec centers; bidding out our County services on a routine basis and performing a feasibility study on some of our County assets. Our county does not routinely bid out the cost of certain services such as healthcare. Last time this was done was 7 years

# JENNIFER LUTERAN

DISTRICT 7

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** Yes, Yes and Yes to all of the above. As I stated above, I believe it is well past time that the business community do more to support our schools and help absorb some of the costs associated with building and operating our schools. I would also continue to look at other revenue sources as those mentioned above.

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas to you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?** I think that 20 year bonds are fine as long as we keep the amount of debt that we have at a manageable level. Our County is in debt over 650 million dollars with another 500 million coming. I don't think the 20 year bonds are the issue. It is the amount of those 20 year bonds that is the issue.

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?** I have always supported putting the County's checkbook on line. I don't think that a taxpayer should ever have to look very hard to see what their tax dollars are being spent on. I would also like to see a more detailed itemization of the school budget. Lastly, I would like to see a schedule of how often the County's services are being bid out.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?**

I believe that if we actively bid out the County services on a routine bases, we would save a lot of money. I would like to see the County stop funding non-profits. I believe that it is up to each person to decide what (if any) non-profit that they want to support and the County should not be doing that for them. I also think that an increase in the rec fees is appropriate. These facilities compete with local gyms but cost about 10% of the cost of those facilities. The County has to make up the difference.

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**

Yes

# BARB STURGEON

## DISTRICT 8

- Email Address: [Barb@votesturgeon.com](mailto:Barb@votesturgeon.com)
- Phone: 615-605-6140
- Political Experience: County Commissioner for 4 years
- Education: B.S. Chemical Engineering, University of Dayton



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Real Estate Agent with Benchmark
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: Member, lector and homebound minister for St. Henry Catholic Parish, Williamson County Master Gardener
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? 8 years

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?** I was concerned that too many residents lacked information regarding our local county government and how it operates. There was a low awareness of the issues impacting the county. This resulted in a low level of engagement. I believe government works best when a higher percentage of citizens participate. Otherwise important decisions concerning the county are made/influenced by a few. So I work hard to keep my constituents informed so they can actively participate in the direction of the County.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?** Increasing economic opportunities in the unincorporated county and increasing convenience and options for residents in unincorporated Williamson County. We need to take measures to level the playing field for businesses in the unincorporated county with those in municipalities. In certain cases, we need to look at revising the county zoning ordinance to allow for more special uses.

One example of a missed economic opportunity in the unincorporated county is the new Stephens Valley development. This development is now a reality which includes a commercial node that is located on the county line but contained entirely in Davidson County. The Williamson County portion of Stephens Valley is zoned only residential. As a result, Williamson County will experience all the impact of commercial zoning but will receive none of the beneficial revenues.

**How do you communicate with your constituents and when are you available to meet?** I publish a monthly newsletter informing residents of current issues on the County Commission floor. I currently have over 1000 recipients and the list is growing. I hold open monthly coffees so residents can discuss issues with me face to face. I have also knocked on thousands of doors in my district and I try to quickly respond to emails and phone calls from residents to listen to their input and concerns.

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** Ideally, a significant portion of the cost impact caused by new growth should be paid for by the source of that impact. If municipalities are approving 85% of new development, it makes sense that developers and the municipalities share the cost impact created by these decisions.

To date, existing residents have been paying a high percentage of the cost for the impact of our population growth, especially in building new schools. This is why I strongly supported the Educational Impact Fee on new construction so that those people moving to Williamson County can help shoulder a fraction of the costs created by their moving here. I fully understand why people want to come to Williamson County. It is a great place to live and raise a family. I do not want to discourage anyone from moving to the County. But we need to make sure we protect the reasons people are moving and staying here in the first place.

# BARB STURGEON

DISTRICT 8

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** The state of Tennessee collects the sales taxes for Williamson County but only partially returns them for funding education through the BEP formula. In past years, factors for growth have been eliminated from the BEP and the amount the state returns per student annually to Williamson County has declined. Currently in Williamson County, BEP funding covers less than half of what is required to fund the operating cost for each student. Williamson County pays the remainder.

What we get back per student is far below what the average county in Tennessee gets, amounting to approximately \$70 million per year shortfall compared to the average county. This is a large amount that could aid significantly in paying for the growth. Where the state boasts that they have no debt and have lately experienced billions of dollars in surplus revenues, Williamson County is over \$600 million in debt chiefly because of the cost of building new schools. Additionally, Williamson County is supporting the education of a high percentage of special needs children. Our excellent reputation in providing for special needs has drawn a large number of families with special needs children to live here for these services. Where the operating cost per student is about \$9000/yr a special needs child can be 10 times this amount. The BEP formula does not recognize this fact nor take any measures in funding these needs.

We need to lobby our state representatives to return more of our county's revenue for operating and capital educational costs. Additionally, all ideas for alternative sources of revenue should be thoroughly vetted and objectively considered before raising property taxes. I sponsored a successful resolution for selling the Cool Springs Convention Center attached to the Marriot hotel. This has been a lackluster financial asset over the past few years and once sold the funds provided from that sale can be used for more important county needs.

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?**

I would support the open checkbook register online here as well.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?**

More county services should be sent out for competitive bidding whether the state requires it or not.

**Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**

YES

# MELISSA MILES

## DISTRICT 8



- Email Address: msm711@gmail.com
- Phone: 615-636-5646
- Political Experience: Member WCRP, RNC Delegate, YR Chairman & Congressional Campaign Volunteer
- Education: B.S.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer:
  - Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: WCRP, Friends of Franklin Parks, Heritage Society, Franklin First United Methodist Church
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? Since 2004

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?** Having deep roots in Franklin, TN since I was born, I grew up helping my grandparents on their 500-acre farm and my father's farm on weekends and summers. The beauty of Williamson County is breathtaking and the people have always been the best all around. I've seen how local government decisions can have a huge impact on citizens and have experienced this personally. Another reason, times have changed. Residents want to see a legislative body that will focus on the future, look at new ways for increasing revenue without raising property tax. After attending some commission meetings it didn't appear that spending was an issue. Everyone voted yes to million dollar projects. Also, I don't like the fact that the commissioners do not see an itemized budget before voting to approve. It was great to see wine sells in grocery stores approved, but they didn't look at the unincorporated areas. Businesses suffered. One grocery store closed. That potential revenue for the county would have been a huge help for funding new schools we need. There desperately needs to be an overhaul of distributed funds. I'm all about promoting faith, family, and financial stability.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?** Taxes

**Have you attended County Commission meetings or work sessions, researched the duties and responsibilities of a County Commissioner, and talked to other elected officials about what your role and time commitments would be as a Commissioner?** Yes, I have attended County Commission meetings and reviewed County Commissioner responsibilities, spoken with the Mayor, several other current commissioners. To do a good job it will take personal time and dedication. But I love it and want to help build a brighter future as well as encourage young ladies and gentlemen to pursue local government as a career.

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** First, I believe well-planned growth can be a good thing for a county. It can be a bad thing if it's not well thought out. It takes serious planning and a future-forward vision to substantiate a vigorous county that embraces a mindset for growth driving real solutions for our infrastructure and schools, allocating funds and innovative ideas that offset debt without increasing property tax. To encourage shared fiscal responsibility takes a willingness to unify and connect with all local municipalities. Second, unity and accountability is key to a strong government. We can build unity by our common bond for the people. Don't be afraid to hold yourself accountable and keep an open mind. It will not always be easy but it can be well worth the efforts. It would not be fair for the residents to pay for growth. I feel that the County Commissioners need to learn and watch what developers plan when land is sold for commercial development. Before high-density development occurs look at the nearest school locations to determine if they are already overcrowded. If new schools need to be built assess how much revenue from taxes will be realized and if the county will have the funds for schools. Residential developers should share in this responsibility and special fees assessed. Same with commercial developers. It's important to assess each situation. With new headquarters entering the

# MELISSA MILES

DISTRICT 8

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** Mentioned in my previous statements, I do not believe current residents should have their property taxes doubled or tripled. This would not be fair to the residents that bought their homes years ago to retire in Williamson County. This is wrong. To maintain economic prosperity, we must keep "Fair and Simple Taxes for Growth," as stated in the Republican Platform. Think about this..." Fair and Simple." Is it going to be "Fair" to raise our long-time resident's property tax again due to the enormous growth and the need for new school systems and roadways? Growth presents a burden for our County residents. I believe in taking a common-sense approach which would not be to raise property taxes. The burdens this will impose on our residents living on a fixed income will have a devastating impact. They could be forced to leave their homes. We must look at alternative funding sources. Commercial or business rental leases should have been subject to sales tax years ago. It doesn't have to be huge. Again, it's common sense or logic that should be the deciding factor on how much the sales tax should be. An example of logic, take the new ChopT restaurant. It partners with the Nashville Food Project to help those without food. Or Happy Retales that gives 100% profit to animal rescues. This is good business. Why can't a paper supplier help schools with paper supplies or a computer company refurbishing its computers for schools? This could lower school budgets and increase learning. A win-win.

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas to you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?** I don't believe in purchasing bonds. It's never smart to plan for growth if it involves creating debt. While some debt is unavoidable, legislative bodies should at all cost avoid debt. As mentioned earlier, we need to look at our current distribution of funds. As times have changed, we need to update our financial system. Traditional budgeting practices are no longer viable in today's economy and many may be obsolete. Old accounting practices can be a source of mismanagement, waste and actually cost the government. I believe taking 'if you don't have it, don't spend it' approach.

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?** I think posting the checkbook register online is a great idea. Also, posting a line item budget that the County Commissioners must approve is also something I would advocate.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?** If you don't have it, don't spend it. Basically, we need common sense solutions that will provide safer communities, better schools, and more efficient infrastructure. We've got to reduce waste. I'm sure there are funds being spent that shouldn't be. Eliminating excessive or ridiculous spending should be stopped and made public if it doesn't. I want to make sure our county government is as frugal as our families must be.

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**  
Yes

# JERRY RAINY

## DISTRICT 8



- Email Address: jrainey543@aol.com bob@bobbpeterman.com
- Phone: 615-400-5512
- Political Experience: Worked on Campaigns
- Education: B.A.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Insurance Executive, J.W. Rainey, Inc.
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: Various Non Profit Boards
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? 40 years

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?** Retirement of Jack Walton, long time Commission Member and Chairman in recent years.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?** Education

**Have you attended County Commission meetings or work sessions, researched the duties and responsibilities of a County Commissioner, and talked to other elected officials about what your role and time commitments would be as a Commissioner?** Yes, have researched it and will be available by phone and in person for ALL constituents.

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** Responsible growth must not over load the infrastructure. The growth should cover much of the cost.

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** As a business man, I would encourage careful study of the need for revenue. As a new comer, this will require study on my part.

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas to you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?** Monitor spending! More study required on my part.

---

# JERRY RAINY

---

DISTRICT 8

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate? Whatever it takes for total transparency and accountability.**

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?**

Departmental reviews and long range planning.

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**

Yes



# BOB PETERMAN

## DISTRICT 9



- Email Address: bob@bobpeterman.com
- Phone: 615-495-7347
- Political Experience: Home Owners Assn. President (volunteer); Williamson County Traffic Strategy Advisory Board (volunteer)
- Education: MBA, Dartmouth College; BS Engineering Science, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Retired. Former national account sales director for Hewlett-Packard Medical Products Group and Philips Healthcare.
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: Franklin Clapham Group Board of Directors; Grace Chapel, Leipers Fork; Continuous volunteer service to churches, hospitals, communities since 1992.
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? Since 2004

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### **Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?**

The Stephens Valley development controversy in 2014 triggered my leadership role in our HOA and led to my working with Commissioners Clark and Kaestner. Sherri Clark has decided not to stand for reelection and encouraged me to run in her absence. I can and will devote full time to serving the people of Williamson County, and working in partnership with state and municipal governments to address the significant infrastructure issues we face and to protect the unique quality of life we enjoy here.

### **On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?**

**Have you attended County Commission meetings or work sessions, researched the duties and responsibilities of a County Commissioner, and talked to other elected officials about what your role and time commitments would be as a Commissioner.** I have attended or watched all CC meetings for the past 16 months and have read the minutes of all CC meetings since 2014. I have met individually with Commissioners Clark, Kaestner, Lawrence, Sturgeon, and Ford. I also worked with Commissioners Little and Herbert on the WC Traffic Strategy Advisory Board. I have a well-research appreciation for the expectations of a CC and, as a retired business executive, am committed to serving on a full time basis. I will communicate with District 9 constituents via email on a regular basis as I have as President of the Temple Hills Links HOA the past 3 years.

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** As our County Mayor has often said, our rapid growth is not paying for itself. School construction cost projections are \$421 million in just 5 years, and county roadway improvements another \$378 million over 20 years. The county's \$600 million debt is the second highest per capita in TN. Our growth-related funding issues have reached the point where only a concerted strategic effort by state, county and municipal governments can resolve them. A larger portion of costs associated with rapid growth should be paid by those directly responsible for that growth, as is commonly found in Florida, Texas, and other high growth areas. WC's Development Education Impact Fee (enacted in 2017 but held up by a group of developers' lawsuit) was a good step in the right direction.

# BOB PETERMAN

DISTRICT 9

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?**

I have not yet thoroughly researched this option and will need to do so before staking out a position. Generally speaking, commercial entities certainly should pay their fair share. The County's practice of providing potential major employers with long-lasting financial incentives to locate here was a great idea 20-30 years ago but should not be continued in this era of such rapid growth and constrained infrastructure.

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas do you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?**

Current county debt is \$600 million and has increased by \$70 million this past year to pay for school costs that are not covered by taxes and state or federal allocations. One thing I learned while studying County Commission minutes is that our most recent bonds were issued at modest (2.75%) interest rates, but little principal will be repaid in the first few years and interest rates will rise to 5% within 5 years. As overall interest rates rise nationwide, it is not inconceivable that WC's average interest rates in a few years could be 7% on debt that has ballooned to \$1 billion.

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?**

Simplified budgeting processes and documentation. Online check register. County Commission minutes online so that voting records will be transparent to all.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?**

Bottoms up budgeting. Merit pay increases based on fulfillment of clearly defined annual goals. Overall compensation increases no greater than national CPI. Lobby TN Legislature to make Williamson County Schools BEP (per student) payments equal to state average given our extraordinary growth costs. Explore prospects for the sale of WC assets not generally considered as government operations.

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**

Yes

# TODD KAESTNER

## DISTRICT 9

- Email Address: tkaestner@brookdale.com
- Phone: 615-594-1862
- Political Experience: County Commissioner for 5 years
- Education: Vanderbilt, BA and MBA University of Louisville



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Executive Vice President Corporate Development, Brookdale Senior Living, Inc.
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: County Commissioner
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? 17 years

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?** Concern regarding protecting land use and managing growth and finances of county.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?** Education

**How do you communicate with your constituents and when are you available to meet?**

5 year incumbent. I regularly meet with constituents over coffee and in evenings. I hold education sessions with groups of constituents and respond via phone and email.

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** This is a very complex question and has been the focus of my tenure. 85% of all housing permits are issued by the 6 municipalities. As a county we desperately need to determine what we want to grow into and by when. No one that I have met wants Williamson County to become like Cobb County in North Atlanta. Further, virtually all of my constituents feel that newcomers should shoulder more of the financial burden that they create

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** Well, the residential impact fee was my initiative, so, yes, I support identifying innovative legal ways to share costs and not simply place all burdens upon existing - often elderly - constituents. Further, I have supported the sales tax resolution because that allows the residents to vote upon how they would like to be taxed. There are many other alternatives, some of which will have to be specifically enabled by our state legislature. The county and the municipalities are children of the state and, as such, can only implement new tax structures or tools if specifically allowed by state code.

# TODD KAESTNER

DISTRICT 9

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas to you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?** See above. The impact fee is one example. Happily, the capital recovery factor on our 20 year bonds is only running .0678, meaning that \$1 of cash flow amortizes \$14.75 of bonds, at current interest rates. We do not borrow at floating rates. We should press the state of TN to stop shorting us \$70.6 million per year in the BEP formula (versus the state average BEP payment. Note that our total schools budget is \$337 million, so 70.6 million is a very large shortfall as compared to our total budget. We should consider moving to merit pay for teachers and differential recruiting salaries for teachers, both to save money. We should evaluate design changes for our school buildings, such as 3 and 4 story buildings which are significantly less costly than 2 story designs. We do have in excess of \$600 million in debt. WC has the 2nd highest debt per capita of the 95 counties, 2nd only to Davidson County. We should focus on land use planning and limit density of new residential development. Again, we really to determine what smart growth means to WC residents. We owe a dear obligation to our constituents. Conversely, we owe no duty whatsoever to someone in Michigan or California who wants to move here.

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?** I like it. We do get clean audits, but transparency could certainly be improved. 75% of our total spend goes to education.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?** See answers above (#7).

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**  
YES

# ROBBIE BEAL

## DISTRICT 10

- Email Address: rbeal@wbnlegal.com
- Phone: 615-861-2304
- Political Experience: 2018, Williamson County Commission; 2006-2014, 21st Judicial District Circuit Court Judge; 1999-2006, Williamson County Juvenile Court Referee
- Education: B.S., Belmont University 1987; University of Memphis 1991



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Attorney; Beal, Green, Nations, and Crutcher
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: Williamson Co. Bar Ass'n, Board Member, Harpeth Scholastic Shooting Club
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? 34 years

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### **Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?**

I've spent much of my professional career in public service. When I returned to the private sector, I missed the opportunity to serve in some capacity. When a vacancy in the Commission came available in my District, I was approached to fill it. There are some significant issues facing Williamson County and I wanted to be a part of those decisions.

### **On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?**

Taxes

### **Have you attended County Commission meetings or work sessions, researched the duties and responsibilities of a County Commissioner, and talked to other elected officials about what your role and time commitments would be as a Commissioner? Incumbents: How do you communicate with your constituents and when are you available to meet?**

Before I was appointed, I had attended numerous Commission meetings as a Judge and Referee. I had to be familiar with the budget process in order to obtain funding. Constituents can communicate with me via phone, e-mail or in person. I'm not hard to find. I manage a law practice which I can be reached at during the day and am happy to discuss matters after business hours at any reasonable time.

### **The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?**

It's important that the Commissioners have a good working relationship with the elected city officials and managers. We must improve communication along those lines. Cities already share in the costs of growth by assuming more and more responsibilities in public safety and infrastructure. However, unrestricted growth necessarily impacts the county and requires additional expenditures; especially when it comes to schools. The cities have agreed recently to provide some sales tax revenue to offset those costs. It is that cooperation that is necessary.

# ROBBIE BEAL

## DISTRICT 10

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** I certainly have no problem with the business community paying for not only the development of their offices and business parks but also making sure that the infrastructure needed to support that construction is also provided for at their expense. This has traditionally been done through property taxes, but that model has changed and must continue to do so. I do not believe rental leases should be subject to a sales tax. Tenants already pay property taxes, building and maintenance costs, and impact fees as a portion of their lease. This type of additional tax would be overly burdensome and redundant and would have a direct impact on business growth.

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas do you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?**

The Federal government has the capacity to print their own money to pay for large capital outlays. The State and Federal governments can redirect significant portions of their budget from one department to another for large capital outlays. Unfortunately, neither of those remedies are available for counties. I love a "pay as you go" mentality. It's just not realistic when it comes to the growth demands on necessary government responsibilities such as schools; we can't save enough money fast enough. Bond issues are usually the only option. I would be more than happy to explore any other means than debt. Except for a mortgage, I don't carry personal debt and I would love to operate the county in the same way....if possible.

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?**

Williamson County is very transparent. As a new Commissioner, I can honestly say, it's not the lack of information that is frustrating, it's the amount of information that is daunting. All of Williamsons County budget can be accessed on-line. However, it is not the easiest to find and compile. I would support any measure to make transparency more obtainable.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?**

The Commission committees are where budget restrictions and request are most closely scrutinized. If waste or extravagance is too be found, it is usually done there. Currently, the county accepts approximately a 2% growth rate in each department to be acceptable. I would like to freeze current budgets. Obviously, some exceptions would need to be made (if you build a new school, you've got to staff it), but those could be analyzed on a case by case basis.

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**

No

# BRANDON RYAN

## DISTRICT 11

- Email Address: tennessee\_ryan@yahoo.com
- Phone: 615-210-9080
- Political Experience: YR Chairman, WCRP Vice-Chairman, Commissioner
- Education: B.A., University of Mississippi



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Regional Sales Manager, Halyard Health
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Grassland Baseball Coach
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? Native

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?** As a native to Williamson County, it was important to me to serve in a constructive manner. In addition, I continued to watch the mounting debt within our County Budget which concerned me greatly. That has been a consistent message of mine since being first elected in 2010.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?** Taxes

**How do you communicate with your constituents and when are you available to meet?**

I post all Resolutions voted upon with explanations on my website along with Committee News. [www.commissionerryan.com](http://www.commissionerryan.com)

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** Obviously, I believe whomever is responsible for the growth...should be paying for it. With that said, my opinion matters little here since State Law dictates the County absorb the majority of it. However, I would like to see the actual developers continue to help the County financially. Having the lawsuit settled between the County and these developers will be crucial in our long-term funding plans.

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** First and foremost, as a member of the County Commission, I will continue to vote against any Property Tax increases. I have voted against every such measure in the past and plan to continue to do so moving forward. I am a strong believer in keeping taxes as low as possible, so before we consider increasing taxes on businesses...I would like to see the schools begin working with the Commission in more of a partnership rather than the current adversarial role. Our debt load is now the 2nd highest expenditure of our County budget.

---

# BRANDON RYAN

---

DISTRICT 11

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas to you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?** I support the tax on developers to help control growth and provide a little relief to our budget. I also presented a Debt Cap Resolution in 2011 to prevent the County from recklessly increasing our bond levels. Unfortunately, that Resolution failed.

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?** In addition to the Taxpayer Education Card I presented to the Commission, I fully support Commissioner Kathy Danner's plan to put our entire "checkbook" online for citizens to see.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?**

First and foremost, we have to get schools in line regarding their spending. In addition to their capital requests, every day operating costs continue to skyrocket. Secondly, we need to hand over any services to the private sector that be better addressed by businesses (gyms, healthcare, etc.)

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**

Yes

---



# BRIAN BEATHARD

## DISTRICT 11



- Email Address: brianbeathard@outlook.com
- Phone: 615-752-8628
- Political Experience: County Commissioner for 8 years
- Education: B.A., Baylor University

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Business Owner
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: Hope Church, Downtown Rotary, Heritage Foundation and Downtown Neighborhood Association
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? 14 years

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?** Originally, I was asked by friends and neighbors to run for the empty seat left when Miss Mary Mills retired from the Commission. I wanted to focus on the same things then that I am focused on now: Great Schools, Low Taxes, High Property Values. With two young children in our public schools, I wanted to ensure the values that caused us to move here would remain intact.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?** Education

**How do you communicate with your constituents and when are you available to meet?**

I communicate by remaining active in the community, maintaining a facebook page, and keeping my home phone number on the county website.

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** I championed the Education Impact Fee because I felt that an unfair burden was being placed on longtime residents who were being forced to endure tax increases to cover growth. In my next term, I plan to focus on controlled growth; and I plan to fight to give the county some control over growth outside the UGB.

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** I support researching any and all alternatives. I also champion the Williamson County freeze on taxes for seniors and retired residents.

---

# BRIAN BEATHARD

---

DISTRICT 11

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas do you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?** See answer above. Also, Williamson County is often featured in magazines and news articles for having some of the best schools in the Country. Occasionally, we are featured as one of the lowest tax counties in the Country as well. But I have yet to see these two stories combined. We are the best county in the entire U.S. if you want to "have your cake and eat it too." No other county in the U.S. with schools that rank in the top 10-20 and simultaneously ranked amongst the counties with the lowest taxes. It is important to understand that we didn't get here by accident. It takes diligent work by smart people who care deeply. I am proud to count myself amongst that group.

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?** I support that idea. I also wish more residents would be involved through attendance of our meetings and committee meetings - all of which are open to the public. Tennessee is one of only a few states that has the "Sunshine Law". Everything we discuss as Commissioners is on public record.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?**

Controlling growth is the #1 thing we can do right now to control the need for more tax dollars.

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**  
No



# NED WILLIAMS

## DISTRICT 12



- Email Address: info@nedwilliams.com
- Phone: 615-207-9669
- Political Experience: Phil Gramm for President (paid); David Hall for Congress (paid); Chief Counsel, Tennessee Senate Judiciary Committee (paid); numerous volunteer campaigns

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Education: The Citadel, BA; University of Tennessee College of Law
- Current Occupation & Employer: Attorney, McCann & Hubbard
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: Fellowship Bible Church, Williamson Co. Soccer Association
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? 12 years

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?** I think we have got to get serious about managing the growth in our county. I also had concerns about competing interests/loyalties of my current commissioners. It seems voters should be able to have confidence that decisions about our county-owned hospital and spending on our schools are not clouded by conflicts of interest.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?** Growth

**Have you attended County Commission meetings or work sessions, researched the duties and responsibilities of a County Commissioner, and talked to other elected officials about what your role and time commitments would be as a Commissioner?** certainly counted the cost--researched, viewed meetings, consulted with sitting commissioners, etc.--before deciding to run. Serving as a commissioner will be no joyride, as I believe to date we have insufficiently prepared for or managed our county's growth.

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** There's no question that our county and municipal governments will need to work together to address the challenges of growth; and the first step is for municipalities to expect to be accountable for any decisions that paint the county into a fiscal corner. Perhaps accountability and transparency will motivate local leadership to work on plans to grow our county with intentionality and by consensus. As far as who should pay for growth and how, it makes sense that the parties causing the growth and benefiting from the growth should bear most of the cost of growth.

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** Sure I would support looking for innovative ways to fund our county government, and I definitely think that we are on the wrong trajectory if we're expecting to keep our low tax burden in Williamson County. And I think we should not be cowed by the task of changing state laws to address challenges of increasing revenue. But at root, I'm less interested in finding ways to get more money to fund government than I am in living within our means. Williamson County has historically been a very desirable place to live, historically had a low tax burden, historically had high property values, and historically had an exceptional school system. I think with plain old fiscal discipline we can right the ship.

---

# NED WILLIAMS

---

## DISTRICT 12

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas do you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?** Those benefiting from growth should bear much of the cost of that growth . . . especially the very high (and very predictable) capital costs associated with growth. We cannot green light any and every development without regard for the true costs and expect to stay out of debt.

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?** An online "checkbook register" sounds like a fine idea, and I say that not because I think county government or county employees are untrustworthy. I would say that such transparency is a social good in and of itself and that type of initiative effectively serves to crowdsource accountability. We need accountability.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?** See my answer to question 7.

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**

This question was skipped



# STEVE SMITH

## DISTRICT 12

- Email Address: [steve@williamson-tn.org](mailto:steve@williamson-tn.org)
- Phone: 615-794-9515
- Political Experience: Franklin Alderman & Commissioner for 13 years
- Education: B.A., Finance and MBA Mississippi State University



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Current Occupation & Employer: Executive Director, Williamson Medical Center Foundation
- Civic/Religious Organization You Belong To: Noon Rotary Club & Franklin First United Methodist Church
- How long have you lived in Williamson County? 31 years

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Thank you for volunteering to serve your community, what motivated you to seek this position?** I have lived in the 12th District over 30 years and enjoy being able to use my experience and skills to help improve our community.

**On your first day in office, what will be the top item on your agenda?** Education

**How do you communicate with your constituents and when are you available to meet?**

I communicate by phone, email and I have a schedule that allows me to visit with anyone at their convenience.

**The County Commission is responsible for approving the budget and funding our schools, roads, and infrastructure with property taxes collected. On the other hand, cities fuel growth by approving zoning requests and building permits for commercial and residential construction. What would you do to encourage a shared fiscal responsibility with local municipalities? Additionally, in your mind, who should pay for growth and how?** Growth is impacting the county and all the municipalities in the county. Each entity has its own responsibilities to manage the issues that growth presents. I think the county and cities can work together as shown by the current sales tax referendum and the associated agreements with the cities. In Williamson County the different political subdivisions have shown the ability to work together.

**Our current property taxes if left unchecked are estimated to double - perhaps triple - in just a few years. The tax burden is on current residents many of whom are looking forward to retirement, living on fixed incomes, or raising families. Would you support legislation to foster sharing the cost of growth with the business sector as many high growth States have done? Would you support researching alternative funding sources such as making commercial or business rental leases subject to sales tax? What other cost containment measures would you recommend?** The business sector already pays 40% of assessed value on commercial property as compared to residential property, which is taxed at 25%. Our property tax rate is currently very attractive compared to many surrounding counties and states. We have several programs for property tax relief for elderly and low income residents. The recently passed educational impact fee on new residential construction along with the proposed increase in the local option sales tax would certainly help avoid some of the need for property tax increases. Property tax increases will obviously need to be a piece of the puzzle going forward.

---

# STEVE SMITH

---

## DISTRICT 12

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**In 2016-2017, \$44,000,000.00 or 21% of our property tax dollars were allocated to pay the interest on our debt. While interest rates are currently low, if we continue to fund growth by borrowing, we take on significant fiscal risk as bonds interest rates rise. What funding ideas do you have other than purchasing 20 year bonds?** There are financing models with municipal bonds other than 20 year maturities and we have explored those and will likely employ some of those. Our debt outstanding will begin decreasing rapidly in three years which will allow the county some flexibility in future borrowing needs.

**In an effort to promote accountability and transparency local municipalities in other states have put their checkbook register on line for citizens to see how their tax dollars are spent. What recommendations would you make to increase transparency and accountability to the electorate?** The county budget is available in detail as a public record and I encourage anyone who is interested to look at it. I don't have a problem with whatever form it is provided in.

**What cost containment measures can you suggest to save tax dollars?** As someone who served during the 2008-2010 time when county departments were required to cut their budgets significantly, I feel the administration continues to oversee and present conservative budgets. As the county grows, demand for the services it provides grow as well, from law enforcement to parks and schools. Williamson County residents have high expectations for the services their county government provides and expects quality. In every budget the size of our county's, there are certainly dollars that could be cut or reduced. In terms of large scale waste, I have not seen it in my years of service.

**Schools funding including interest payments on money borrowed to build new schools is close to 80% of the total County budget. Commissioners vote either to accept or reject the budget as presented, they have no control over how the money is spent. If the budget is rejected, they must negotiate with the Director of Public schools until they reach a resolution. Would you support a resolution to change current law to allow line item veto power to the County Commission when approving the School Budget?**

No

