

# Adams County Commissioners Candidate Questions

Mike Tharp

**Campaign statements often include "lower taxes," but, as costs increase, how do you prioritize realistic choices?**

Everyone in our community has had to tighten their belts financially. It should be no different for the city and county departments. As representatives of the County, the Board must be fiscally responsible with funds and get the most out our tax dollars.

We as elected officials need to take a discerning look at budget requests and ask ourselves;

"Is this in the better interest of the community as a whole?"

"Could this be trimmed down a bit to allocate funds to other projects, while still being effective and benefiting the community as it should?"

"Are we doing all that we can to ensure the success and progress of the Adams County in the future?"

**What is your vision for the growth and development of Hastings/Adams County businesses and industries?**

My hope is to nurture a welcoming posture to incoming businesses and developers to expand employment and the diversity of incoming entities. This can only benefit everyone in our community with options and by decreasing the tax burden.

We're definitely headed in the right direction with many new businesses and opportunities locally. The Theatre Development District, Valentini's Martinis and Art, Joyride Pedal Company, and a new wine and cheese market downtown are all great examples.

I believe there are additional opportunities to improve existing areas of Hastings and Adams County as well. The dog park on the southeast part of town has potential for



improvement. Less used venues like the City Auditorium and Brickyard Park could be utilized more often to add less expensive entertainment options year round. MPH Raceway east of town could perhaps offer safety courses for drivers of all ages and skill levels.

We are a great and thriving community and with the proper work, we'll continue the upward trend.

**Are there any additional areas of potential cooperation between county government and other local government entities that you would support?**

Absolutely. I believe inter-communication between the County Board and City departments is crucial to a mutually beneficial relationship which can then filter down to all citizens of Adams County.

From visiting with folks about my bid for County Commissioner, I get asked a myriad of questions, but mostly pertaining to the specific role and function of the Board. Most don't know when the board meets, what district they reside in, what exactly it is the Board does, etc.

I feel the Board of Commissioners is an extremely vital part of local government and folks should have a better understanding of the Board's role in the community. If citizens gain a better grasp on the Board's role, it will only serve to add to the quality of life in Adams County.

**As an elected leader, how will you help to shape a positive, growth-oriented narrative for the Hastings community?**

The foundation of my campaign is transparency, accessibility, approachability, accountability and unity. I want the constituents of my district to know that they can reach out to me and voice their concerns whenever they arise. I want them to feel comfortable contacting me and knowing that I will address their issue in a timely and effective manner and will be accountable for my decisions.



I want to ensure a strong line of communication between the County and City Departments, as well as the citizens to ensure nothing falls through the cracks. In this way, our community will be stronger and better served all around.

**What experience(s) or education do you have that would better prepare you for this position?**

My education from Adams Central and Hastings College is no doubt important, but I feel the years I spent in the Boy Scouts (Eagle Scout) and active duty in the Army has provided me with the skills and leadership necessary for County Commissioner.

That combined training, taught me to be flexible and adapt on the fly to situations I'm confronted with. It also honed my communication skills and I learned how to problem solve with others who might have differing opinions and ideas. The ability to listen to others and incorporate their ideas into a workable strategy will be prove invaluable to find working solutions to County issues.

Lastly, my professional experience being a licensed funeral director for nearly 25 years will be a sizeable asset in my dealings with others. I have learned patience, empathy and overall understanding for all individuals of all backgrounds. I've dealt with many people of differing ethnicities, religions and socio-economic backgrounds in their hardest times. This has equipped me to better serve them in their time of need and will transfer to serving the citizens of Adams County in the most effective way possible.

