

Voters Guide 2022

Chisago County Commissioner

District 1

Tim MacMillan

Is public safety a concern in the county? How should it be addressed? “Public safety is the core of how we as a community survive and live our lives in a safe society. Without public safety, we



Tim MacMillan

would be a community of lawlessness. Public safety always needs to be at the forefront of how we govern in society and a top priority in how we govern and plan in the county. People have the right to the best public safety, and as your District 1 County Commissioner, we will promote public safety! I would continue to have community public safety meetings within our county and with local public safety partners like our Sheriff, Chiefs, probation, courts, and most importantly, citizens to listen and learn from the community and have a plan of how we can address public safety concerns. We need to continue to work on the positive things being done in the community to keep us all safe. We need to support our law enforcement community!”

What is the biggest issue facing a Chisago County Commissioner? “Taxes! Chisago County has the fourth highest county taxes in the state of Minnesota. As Commissioner, my role is listening to residents, business owners, and municipalities within the district regarding what amenities and services are needed, how these requests affect the tax base, and figure out the best way to pay for them without it affecting the tax levy. We all have needs and wants, we work hard for the dollars we earn, but we know we must have a plan for how we spend our dollars. How we spend county dollars, your tax dollars, should be no different. We must have a strategic plan to stay accountable to the spending. My role as your Commissioner is to work with all to balance those needs versus wants and to figure out a way to pay for them. My role is to represent sound community ideas that support our local businesses, schools, parks, public safety, and roads and control spending by having a plan and priorities for the spending of our county tax dollars.”

Jim Swenson

Is public safety a concern in the county? How should it be addressed? “I feel strongly that the number one goal of an elected official should be public safety. Residents MUST feel safe and secure



Jim Swenson

in their homes and daily life. It’s obvious to me that the Chisago County Sheriff’s Office has embraced the proactive public safety model of prevention and protection -- as evidenced by the various initiatives like community outreach, social media presence, and relationship building through their public safety events, school visits, and so forth. Continued collaboration between the CCSO, local law enforcement agencies, the county attorney and mental health services is KEY to addressing the growing number of drug-related crimes and mental health-related challenges that law enforcement has had to deal with over the last years. The discussion needs to take place as to whether we have enough mental health services available and are we allocating enough funds to these services. The safety of our citizens and LE officers is at stake.”

What is the biggest issue facing a Chisago County Commissioner? “The ongoing issue of high county taxes is the biggest issue facing taxpayers. I have six years’ worth of vast experiences in budgeting and finance as North Branch mayor and councilor. Under my leadership, North Branch has done an excellent job of maximizing dollars so as to be good stewards of taxpayers’ money. Our present tax levy for 2022 is 1.6% and has been less than the cost-of-living increase in the past four years. I look forward to bringing that same sense of fiscal efficiency to the county and collaborating on the county’s budget and taxation processes. I want to develop a strategic plan so that the county has short, medium- and long-range goals that guide the budgeting process — just as we do in North Branch. It’s time for fresh ideas and ones from an experienced and knowledgeable leader who has been through this process many times with great success.”

Chris DuBose

Is public safety a concern in the county? How should it be addressed? “Public safety is always a concern and we are fortunate to have a strong and dedicated Sheriffs department and local police departments. As a former LAPD



Chris DuBose

Police Commissioner, I know how important it is to support our deputies and officers. One of the most important things we can do is provide not only financial support, but also the emotional support that is lacking in some parts of the country. I want our officers to know that we have their backs when they perform their duties and provide strong training to help them in critical situations. I was happy to support acquiring additional non-lethal tools so that we may avoid tragic outcomes. We need to support competitive wages so that we may recruit and retain good offers. Our Sheriff, deputies, jailers, and dispatchers are doing a great job and I will always Back the Blue.”

What is the biggest issue facing a Chisago County Commissioner? “Our biggest issue is taxes! We are one of the top counties in the state in property taxes mainly because of our lack of commercial properties which typically pay double what homes do leaving our tax burden on homeowners. We need to encourage businesses from inception in someone’s home or garage and give them a path through zoning and incentives to grow within the county instead of chasing them away to neighboring states and counties. Almost 80% of business investment comes from within the county and in the past, we have not been very welcoming to home-based business so they have left. We also need to be smart about budgeting, looking at ways to make our operations more efficient and eliminate waste. In the past, the budget was set at unrealistic levels and the county spent down reserves instead of being transparent and sensible.”

District 2

Rick Green

Is public safety a concern in the county? How should it be addressed? “Public safety is our top responsibility. I grew up in Chisago County. After my wife, Randi, and I were married in 1976, we raised our three children on our Amador Township family farm. We raise beef cattle and grow corn, soybeans,



Rick Greene

and hay on approximately 300 acres. We take public safety in Chisago County personally. Major crime that we see on the television every night has not reached our county as severely as it has in the cities yet. Since joining the Chisago County Board of Commissioners in 2006, I have worked to adequately fund both equipment and personnel in our Sheriff’s Office. We must pay our high-quality sheriff’s deputies and county employees a prevailing wage or risk losing them. We must continue to prioritize the funding of our 911 dispatch center, which is used by law enforcement agencies, local fire departments, and ambulance services. I currently serve on the executive committee of the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board, which manages emergency services and 911 systems in member counties.”

What is the biggest issue facing a Chisago County Commissioner? “It is impossible to state one item as the biggest issue facing any county commissioner. One of the greatest challenges is real estate taxes, which are too high. Minnesota businesses pay a higher real estate tax rate than homeowners. In the past, Wisconsin businesses have paid the same real estate tax rate as Wisconsin homeowners. This makes it difficult for border counties in Minnesota such as ours to attract new business. This burden is now worse because of the recent massive increases in residential property values versus the more limited increases in business property values. Any levy increase must be limited to the minimum and we must re-evaluate how we are spending our federal COVID support funds so that critical needs are being addressed. Zoning and other regulations must support businesses and we must restore the funds that have been cut from our HRA/EDA’s business development projects. Finally, Minnesota must stop penalizing us for being a border county.”

Dan Dahlberg

Is public safety a concern in the county? How should it be addressed? “Public safety is not a concern and being the Mayor of Rush City for the past



Dan Dahlberg

10 years has given me the opportunity to develop a sound relationship with our Sheriff, the support staff, sergeants, and deputies. They serve and protect with professionalism and show a caring attitude towards the people in Chisago County. Also, the areas that have their own police department, such as, North Branch, Wyoming, and lakes area understand the importance of a strong bond between law enforcement and our community. If I am elected as District 5 County Commissioner, I will continue to support our law enforcement officers as I have for the past 10 years.”

What is the biggest issue facing a Chisago County Commissioner? “While visiting with families and students within Chisago County, there were four main topics that stood out. There is frustration of not having a strong internet connection that allows students to complete homework and professionals to work from home without continual disconnects. Strengthening broadband needs to be a top priority for us. Safe and well-maintained roads is foundational for any community and must always be a priority. Strong social services for families who need help while trying to get back on their feet cannot be overlooked. Fulfilling obligations of the county while holding the line on property taxes to prevent overburdening the residents of Chisago County. These issues need a strong representative. My 10 years as Rush City Mayor working with public and private leaders and organizations will show I am willing to work hard as your representative for District 5.”

District 5

Cindy Erickson

Is public safety a concern in the county? How should it be addressed? “Public safety is always a concern for county commissioners. I



Cindy Erickson

feel fortunate to live in Chisago County where I have always felt safe. Our Sheriff Department is doing a great job, but right now in Chisago County, our Sheriff Department is having a hard time finding people to fill open positions and keeping trained officers from leaving to find better opportunities elsewhere. It is important that we adequately fund the sheriff’s Department so it can remain a strong and stable force, providing safety for us all.”

What is the biggest issue facing a Chisago County Commissioner? “The sharp rise in property taxes is the biggest challenge facing County Commissioners. For decades the State provided some property tax relief in the form of a Homestead credit, which was created to make homeownership more affordable. A few years ago, the legislature has decided to phase out the Homestead Credit. The County has been forced choose between making major cuts in needed services or shift that, that loss of revenue to the tax payers. We want our homes to increase in value because it increases our net worth, but when that raise in value is coupled with a sharp decline in the homestead credit, it is a hard hit especially in counties like ours, without a large commercial tax base. One option to address this challenge would be working with our legislators to restore the Homestead Credit. That would be very beneficial for our homeowners in Chisago.”

Marlys Dunne is running unopposed for Chisago County Commissioner for District 3, while Ben Montzka is running unopposed for Chisago County Commissioner for District 4.