

1. The City is a large and complex organization; tell us about your experience and how it has prepared you to successfully oversee city operations.

My work in state government and my ability to build rapport with others has prepared me to talk to the people staff and work within the hierarchy of government.

Additionally, my ability to make connections with people makes it easier to ask for help and explanations of the complex processes of government. It also gives me the ability to explain this processes to other residents of our community

2. Lincoln is a growing and vibrant community with citizens engaged in varied interests and pursuits; how will you bring disparate groups together to build consensus? How will you set a standard for civility?

I hope to set a standard of civility to modeling that behavior. I will continue to engage with residents from all backgrounds. After COVID (AC) I hope to be able to return to attending community meetings, neighborhood organizations meetings and community events. At every opportunity, I remind Lincolnites that people they consider “others” are residents of our community with families, jobs, hopes and dreams just like them.

3. The Citizen’s Transportation Coalition recommended and voters approved an increase in the local option sales tax to help finance Lincoln’s streets infrastructure needs. Are you supportive of the quarter-cent sales tax and Advisory Committee on Transportation?

Overall, yes I am. The quarter-cent sales tax was one-half of when it was determined to be the need of the community--but it is a start. I am less excited about the success the committee has had explaining to the community the process and how the money has been earmarked and spent. The campaign for the quarter-cent sales tax swelled expectations of quick and perfect streets. The committee has not addressed expectations well. I will encourage more, direct communication with the public.

4. What strategies would you pursue to keep the city affordable to live in?

I believe one of the biggest barriers to having a city which is affordable to live in is lower to lagging wage increases for many Lincolnites who work 40-hour weeks. There is little the council can do about that. The market has made some corrections in that arena, but it has been slow. The city MUST do as much as it can to keep the cost of city operations down. The current focus of the city council has been to increase housing stock, which in turn will stabilize the cost of housing while wages catch up.



Bennie Shobe

5. Lincoln is expected to receive additional revenue from casino gambling revenue. What should the City of Lincoln do with the additional revenues?

As the city currently does with KENO revenues, I will encourage the city to use any revenues for the proposed casino to cover some of the cost of specific city operations. Those actions will provide an opportunity to shift dollars within the city budget. That in turn will allow the city to invest in other infrastructure and perhaps lower the levy rate.

6. What do you see as the City's role in retaining incumbent businesses and attracting new businesses and employees?

While the city maintains a "Fast Forward" fund to assist in completing projects which may help remove barriers to new business moving into our city. I hope to direct the city to Excelerate some of the infrastructure projects currently in planning stages in order for the city to be prepared for the POST-Covid growth spurt. I won't pretend to understand all the nuances of operating a business with our city. I don't know what the barriers to success are or what steps can be taken (have been taken) to retain employers. But I do know people who know the answers to those questions. I will continue to engage them and continue to discuss out of the box thinking and discourage "what aboutisms" as an excuse for inaction.

7. What will you do to drive innovation in the Lincoln community?

I think my answer above addresses a big portion of this question. I continue to read articles about technology and the next economy in an effort to stay current on "future" trends. Personally, I am not a big early adopter. But I do recognize the need to prepare the community to be able to pivot when the next innovation comes along. I watch what is happening in coastal cities and ask when that might arrive here.