



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidates

Leon County Commission District 1

- Jasmine Ali
- Bill Proctor*

Leon County Commission District 3

- Emily Fritz
- Kyle Frost
- Rick Minor
- Rex Rekstis*
- Carlos Rey

Tallahassee City Commission, Seat 3

- Lisa Brown
- Richard Garzola
- Alexander Jordan*
- Jeremy Matlow
- Bill Schack

Tallahassee City Commission, Seat 4 (Mayor)

- Norris Barr
- John Dailey
- Dustin Daniels
- Carrie Litherland
- Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda
- Joe West

Tallahassee City Commission, Seat 5

- Henry Adelusi, Jr.*
- Howard Kessler
- Robert Lotane
- Dianne Williams-Cox

***Candidate survey not submitted**



Leon County Commission District 1



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Jasmine Ali, Leon County Commission, District 1

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

I would revamp the Office of Economic Vitality to make it more known and accessible to the people of Leon County. Additionally, I would like to see an increase in small business grants and more co-working spaces available at an affordable rate for entrepreneurs.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

Improvements in safe and affordable housing, increased wages, equitable distribution of public school improvement projects, more entertainment options.

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

Local government should be working target the conditions that lead to crime and economic segregation. Lack of employment, poor living conditions, inadequate health services, and a struggling school system have led us to where we are and we must commit ourselves to targeting those issues that are the foundation of our community.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

I do not believe that the entire entities should be consolidated. However, I believe that certain departments could become more efficient if they were consolidated. For example, the criminal investigation units of the Leon County Sheriffs Department and the Tallahassee Police Department could become more effective if consolidated.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**



No. I believe that Leon County has potential to acquire the revenue from other areas to cover the costs associated with the Children's Services Council. We must consider other areas, such as tourism, to find the funding.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

I believe that our business owners and potential entrepreneurs should be informed about the resources available to them. I find that many local business owners do not know that the OEV exists. Also, I believe that the local government should partner with FSU and FAMU to make the entrepreneurial resources that are available to students open to local residents. These resources include mentorship, grants, marketing tools, business development, and legal services.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

I believe that the investigations should serve as a wake up signal to the community to elect individuals with integrity and to become more involved in the process.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Leon County's reputation and identity today can be described as diverse, progressive, and close-knit. Over half of our population is college educated and we value being a well informed community when it comes to education and what is going on around us.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

In 2024, Leon County should be well into its transition to being a 21st century county. Being that we set the precedent for the State of Florida, we should prioritize inclusion, innovation, and a high quality of life.



Leon County Commission District 3



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

1) Name & Seat you are running for:

Emily Fritz, Leon County Commission District Three

2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?

As an elected official, I will be a cheerleader for our community. Although we have many problems, we still have many assets, such as the universities, the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, and a quality health care community. We need to make it known that Leon county wants businesses here. As a former salesperson, I am willing to make personal calls to lure businesses to Tallahassee. I will work to have as little government interference in business as possible. Businesses can't grow if excessive regulations are imposed upon them. I will not raise taxes and will exert every effort to lower them. The airport is a major impediment for business growth. We should explore lowering landing fees as incentives to improve flights. I want to hear other ideas as well. I am open to using a portion of the Blueprint 2020 economic development dollars to assist in making our airport a more valuable economic development tool.

3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?

The cost of living in Leon County is high, which is a problem for a young person. Reducing the tax burden will make housing more affordable and reduce the cost of businesses to operate. Lower business costs will make the fees businesses charge for their services and goods more affordable. Young people, especially those who did not grow up here, do not feel plugged in to Tallahassee/Leon County. Although making people feel connected is not the responsibility of government, I believe the county can help by appointing more young people to boards and committees.

4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?

These are very complicated issues, and I do not believe local government can solve them alone. I have separated the question into the three components.

Economic segregation: This is common among medium and large cities. Affluent people usually do not live in the same sections of a community as less affluent people. This will not go away,



but we can bring more people into the middle class by lowering the cost of living and improving the vibrancy of the business community, which creates jobs.

High crime: The county does not manage a law enforcement agency, but it funds the sheriff's office. If elected, I will assure that the sheriff receives the tools he needs. I will also hold the sheriff accountable for spending the money properly and getting results. Resolving the problems at the dispatch agency is a high priority. Fighting crime is not effective if the dispatch agency doesn't operate properly. High crime areas need better lighting.

Poverty: Education is the most valuable poverty prevention tool. Our school system is good but can always improve. I have confidence that our school district is working on this. We can promote volunteerism in the community so children from underprivileged homes can have role models. Organizations can "adopt" schools.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

Consolidation should offer opportunities to increase efficiencies. The execution, however, will not be easy. I look forward to reading the report of the Chamber's Consolidation Study Group. If efficiencies can be projected, I support developing a detailed execution plan. The plan should be developed by people who are not currently employed in either government, since consolidation can affect their employment.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

No. It is premature to consider raising taxes when we don't know how much money is currently being spent and how it is utilized. For instance, the county's primary care program, which costs \$1.7 million per year, only performed 126 patient visits for children ages 0 – 17 in 2017. This is poor performance for the amount of money invested. We also need to recognize that every child in Leon County does not need to be on a government program.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**



The jury is still out on the OEV, and I hope to see results from it. As stated in the first question, we should hold the line on taxes, regulations, and improve our air service. FSU's Innovation Hub and the Jim Moran School of Entrepreneurship are useful tools in assisting with start-ups.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

Yes.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Our reputation has suffered due to the crime, perceived public corruption, and poverty. However, I have seen many troubled organizations recover from tough times. We have enough people in this community who care about it enough to fix it. I am one of those people.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Kyle Frost, Leon County Commission, District 3

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

Simplifying and easing the permitting process. Talking with local business owners during the campaign, I've heard from many that it is simply confusing to start a business. We should be simplifying this, and offering guidance to anyone that wants to start a business in our community.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

A few things come to mind: better cost of living, making it easier to start a business, and marketing our city as a great place for young people to live and work. The cost of living in Tallahassee and Leon County is high compared to the available wages and jobs, and this can be addressed by bringing jobs to Tallahassee or creating jobs in Tallahassee. This can be done through my second point, simplifying the process to start a business. We should be offering a guiding hand to young entrepreneurs that want to call Tallahassee home, not making it so difficult they choose to go elsewhere with their business. Lastly, making sure we market ourselves correctly. People want a thriving downtown, and great places to go in their free time. Making sure we market our natural attractions such as our incredible parks, lakes, and trails, as well as continuing to invest in the arts, will not only keep young generations here but convince them to tell their friends about it as well.

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

I strongly believe that a stable home leads to success in the future, both economically and socially. Because of this, I've brought up the idea of creating a temporary housing project that can help people get stable incomes by having a mailing address they can use to get a bank account and get a job with. This would create more workers to fill the jobs we have, as well as reduce crime in the future by creating a stable home life that children can grow up in feeling cared for and loved.



- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

On the issue of consolidation, I firmly believe that at the end of the day it is up the constituents. I would like to see more studies done on whether or not it is economically viable, as well as how the plans would work. I do not think that the conversation should be dismissed without looking at and considering all the information available to us. I do believe that the City and the County can work together to functionally consolidate overlapping departments, such as the parks departments and animal control, for example.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

As previously stated, I believe a stable home life is paramount to our future success, both economically and for reducing crime. Because of this, I am in support of the Children's Services Council. However, I would seek to work with the Our Kids First PAC that is putting together a tentative plan for the CSC to determine where there is overlap in proposed services with the County's already available services. These could be removed from the County's budget, and hopefully given back to the people in the form of lower taxes. My hope is that we can find a way to match the increases in taxes with decreases from the County, or even use less total tax dollars after looking at this issue.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

First and foremost it needs to be easier to start a business. The permitting process needs to be simplified and eased. The Office of Economic Vitality can do this by continuing to market and offer different incentives for businesses looking to locate themselves here at home.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

Absolutely. Local government needs fresh faces to get us out of the problem the current City Commission has created, and ensure that it doesn't happen again. Our ethics systems need to be made much more transparent.



- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Our reputation and identity today has been tarnished by the FBI investigation, the abysmal crime rate, and the horrible amount of poverty that faces our community. Unless these things are addressed, economic development will not be able to reach its full potential.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

To be not only a leader of our area, but a leader in the state and a leader in the nation. Our city and county house the capital of the 3rd largest state in the United States. It is time we work towards making ourselves look and act like it. We need to move past the corruption and ethics investigations, and continue to invest in keeping our younger population while leveraging the beautiful natural landscapes we have around us. Creating an environment rich with opportunity for all our citizens and our entrepreneurs, and a place people feel safe.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

1) Name & Seat you are running for:

Rick Minor, Leon County Commission, District 3

2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?

Our next County Commissioner should have an in-depth understanding of the business world. I believe I'm the candidate with the broadest, most relevant business experience and I also have a history of working with the Chamber to promote local business growth. I spent 9 years at Accenture, a global IT/business consulting firm, working on projects throughout the United States as well as in Germany, South Africa, Hong Kong, Denmark and the Canadian Maritimes. I've also run the financial operations of a small business, managing cash flow and making payroll. Later, as Chief of Staff, I developed the concept of Local Business Saturday, a 'buy local' marketing campaign, and worked closely with the Tallahassee Chamber on its public launch. For an entire year we partnered with more than 200 local businesses to promote the benefits of shopping locally. As a County Commissioner, I'll work with OEV, FSU and others to recruit specialized businesses interested in the MagLab's research. By doing so, we can establish in Leon County a high-tech magnetics industry cluster that generates new, high-paying jobs and benefits our existing local businesses as well. Over the next several years, Domi Station, the FAMU SBDC, and the Jim Moran School of Entrepreneurship will transform our entrepreneurial sector. Our County Commission must explore ways we can leverage those investments to maximize their benefits. Finally, as someone who has helped run a small business, I know businesses won't invest in expansion unless they're comfortable with the local business environment. Our County Commission must always be aware of that and help create a stable, relatively predictable business environment. We should be constantly looking for ways to help businesses reduce costs. The commercial utility deposit rebates that were offered by the City of Tallahassee a couple of years ago are an excellent example of how a local government can help.

3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?

Ask a Millennial living in Austin, Charlotte, or Atlanta about their career prospects and you'll probably get an enthusiastic response. Ask the same question to one living in Tallahassee, and most likely you'll get a shrug. This is what we need to change. The cities that will thrive in the future are the ones that will appeal to Millennials. Like many of us, they're looking for the things that foster a high quality of life: good career prospects, social activities, outdoor amenities, a low cost of living, and low crime. We must focus on initiatives that will attract



and retain talented people, such as the entrepreneurial efforts of the Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship, Domi Station, the FAMUSBDC and others. The OEV and the Chamber – in partnership with local government and our universities – should encourage the growth of Leon County's entrepreneurial sector and actively work to retain its talent. Co-working environments like CoLab @ The Pod are also a key component of appealing to the new generation of workers.

4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?

1) Give our law enforcement the personnel and tools they need. Law enforcement staffing shortages over the past several years have contributed to Leon County's high crime rate. We've been asking deputy sheriffs and officers to do too much, with too little. Our next County Commissioner must be committed to working with LCSO and TPD so that deputies and officers have the personnel, equipment and training they need to do their jobs. The federal COPS program of the 1990s proved what already seems like common sense: placing more law enforcement on the streets and earning the trust of neighbors leads to a reduction in crime. Fortunately, in FY18 the LCSO received funding for 13 new positions. 2) Create more opportunities for our young people. We should work more closely with Tallahassee Community College and others to identify the employment needs of local businesses, and then assist in developing those skills among our young people. By helping businesses offer more internships and entry-level opportunities, we can create more jobs and help young workers build rewarding careers in Tallahassee. This will also reduce expenses for small businesses, since they'll spend less money training entry-level employees. 3) As a community, we also need to increase our inventory of affordable housing (e.g., homes under \$200,000) which are currently in short supply.

5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?

I'm skeptical, but I'm committed to having an open mind and will review empirical evidence on the subject. The recent study commissioned by the Chamber suggested an economic boost but stated that consolidation will not work if there's not a community-wide consensus about our future. I do support the consolidation of some specific functions of the City of Tallahassee and Leon County. Consolidation of the Planning, Growth Management, and Economic Development functions are facilitating growth and boosting the local economy. However, I have strong reservations against consolidation of the Tallahassee Police Department and the Leon County Sheriff's Office, and I think most citizens would agree with me. As a County



Commissioner, one of my top priorities will be to ensure the safety of our citizens, and I do not believe county and city residents would be better served by the consolidation of our law enforcement.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

As the CEO of the Big Bend's food bank, I'm familiar with the unmet need of children in our community. One in five children in Leon County are food insecure, meaning they do not have consistent access to healthy, nutritious food. Recently, a single mother told one of my staff members that she drinks water all day to stave off the hunger pains, so that she can afford to feed her children that evening. The problem is real, and it's pervasive. As such, I support the Children Service Council ballot initiative for 2020. As a Commissioner, I will do my part to ensure that the research conducted over the next two years is fair and unbiased, so that voters will have the analysis they need to make an informed decision.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

As I mentioned in a previous question, as a County Commissioner I'll work with OEV, FSU and others to recruit specialized businesses interested in the MagLab's research. By doing so, we can establish in Leon County a high-tech magnetics industry cluster that generates new, high-paying jobs and attracts further investment. The economic benefits will extend beyond the cluster itself, since these new companies will need services provided by our existing businesses. Domi Station, the FAMU SBDC, and the Jim Moran Institute are in the midst of transforming our entrepreneurial sector. Our County Commission must explore ways we can leverage those investments to maximize their benefits, so that we can see Tallahassee/Leon County will be seen as an emerging national leader in entrepreneurship and innovation.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

The ongoing FBI investigation has damaged Tallahassee's reputation and continues to undermine our ability to attract investment. While there's little we can do about the investigation itself, we can continue to push for stronger ethics policies and practices in our local government. Our County government has a decent ethics policy on paper, but that doesn't matter if our elected and appointed officials don't LIVE by it. That's why we also need



comprehensive accountability, with checks and balances, so that unethical behavior can be identified and addressed. We should also expand the content and frequency of ethics training for our local officials, so they are continually reminded of their obligations to the public. Currently, the Leon County Charter has no reference to a code of ethics. I strongly support the proposed ethics charter amendment that was unanimously approved by the County Commission in April and which will appear on the Nov. 6th ballot. The amendment will insert into the County Charter an explicit requirement for a Code of Ethics.

9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?

Tallahassee/Leon County has several positive attributes that can attract investment and other growth opportunities: a highly educated workforce (#1 among Florida's 67 counties), a relatively low cost of living, two universities and a community college, good healthcare, and excellent outdoor amenities. However, we're being held back by persistent issues such as the stigma of high crime, a dearth of inexpensive flights to/from our airport, and a lack of consensus about our identity. As a Commissioner, I will be committed to working with the Chamber and our community to resolve these problems so we can live up to our full potential.

10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?

At a Tallahassee Chamber Conference a few years ago, Karen Moore said that our community was on the verge of a quantum leap. I believe she was right then, and I believe that it's still true today. By 2024, I'd like Tallahassee/Leon County to be in the midst of that quantum leap. We should see the beginnings of a new high-tech, magnetics industry cluster in Innovation Park. Our entrepreneurial sector -- spurred on by the Jim Moran Institute, Domi Station, FAMU'S SBDC and others -- should be thriving with new ventures that call Leon County home. Investors from around the country should be reading about how Tallahassee is emerging as one of America's most promising cities for business and for livability. I have a daughter who is four-and-a-half years old and another daughter on the way, due on November 19th. I believe Leon County is a great place to raise them now, and in 2024 I want their generation to be immersed in an exciting, thriving community that will give them every chance for success as they grow up and eventually enter the workforce. By working together, we can build upon the good work that has already been done and make Leon County an even better place to live –not just for them, but for all of us. I have the energy, dedication and experience to be a leader in our efforts to make Karen Moore's prediction a reality, and that's why I'm running for the County Commission.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Carlos Rey, Leon County Commission District 3

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

I will work towards removing the bureaucracy that stifles the entrepreneurial spirit. One of my first objectives would be to create a task force comprised of business owners and government administrators in order to identify the opportunities to streamline the process of starting and running a business in Leon County. People should not have to struggle to understand the ins and outs of putting an idea into action. The rest of the world should know about the great businesses we have in Leon County. There should be an ambassador program established to showcase to visitors the great businesses and talent present in our community. Whenever a researcher comes to our MagLab, they should be given a tour emphasizing our startups and established businesses. Business and capital will flow towards the talent. We have the talent, let's show it.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

As county commissioner, I will strengthen the relationship between universities and local businesses. Recent graduates are leaving because they have no connection to this community. We have to create internship opportunities so college students can establish a connection to this community before they graduate. Our local government can also market the job opportunities that exist in our community. A website that highlights the high-tech companies and jobs will help retain and attract talent.

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

It is critical to expose students at a young age to the opportunities available to them outside their neighborhoods. Our local government should coordinate with the great universities in our county to establish programs that give students the chance to learn about those opportunities. Crime can be addressed at multiple levels. In order to contain the active criminal activity, our county leaders should support law enforcement using hot spot policing combined with problem solving policing. This approach to policing dedicates resources to



those areas in our community with statistically highest rates of crime and allows the police to work with the community to address the causes of those crimes. Our code officers should identify blighted areas, which are usually the site of criminal activity, for demolition. We should create a diversion program that allows those who commit a first time minor offense a chance escape to avoid spiraling down the criminal justice system. Individuals should be given an opportunity to right their ways. For those who are exiting the criminal justice system, we should create opportunities for them to take on responsibilities. I always believe that one derives purpose from the responsibilities they take on. As a commissioner I will also focus expending revenue towards infrastructure. Simple things as lighting, sidewalks, and neighborhood parks can help develop and strengthen a community.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

To consolidate, or not to consolidate? That is the question this community has been asking for over 40 years. I don't believe we have to wait for consolidation by referendum to find ways to eliminate duplication and waste in our services and departments. We should be working towards establishing functional consolidation in order to improve efficiencies. The local governments should implement design thinking to understand the journey individuals take to access services and identify the stressors they experience along that journey. We should strive to eliminate those stressors. Functional consolidation can be done in a piecemeal manner in order to build upon experience and learn from mistakes. Once there is sufficient functional consolidation it will be easier to establish a unified leadership approach to governance.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

When approaching social policy decisions, I ask the following questions: 1) What is the scale of the problem, 2) Is it solvable, and 3) Is it neglected? These questions have not been sufficiently answered on the matter regarding children services, that is why I don't support a tax increase. Although there is a socio-economic divide in our community, a needs assessment should be done to determine the effectiveness of existing services used to address this issue. I believe a needs assessment will help identify steps that can be taken to address the socio-economic issues in our community without putting more burden on the constituency.



- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

In order to support, retain, and attract businesses we have to strengthen the relationship between government, academia, and the private sector. The relationship between these three entities will help establish an Iron Triangle of Entrepreneurship. This Iron Triangle will help define a vision for our local economy, which will assist in attracting and retaining businesses. In an effort to assist startups, these entities can also identify the resources available to start and run a business in Leon County and make that information easily accessible. The mystery of starting of business can be eliminated by creating a flow chart or a roadmap online that indicates all the steps you have to take along the way. The Office of Economic Vitality can help establish and market internship programs, which play a vital role in talent retention. This community should also be highlighting the talent and companies in our community. There should in order to attract outside businesses to invest in Leon County.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

These investigations create an uncertainty of where we stand as a community. There are still questions of whether or not any illicit behavior took place. When people no longer feel they can trust their local leaders, they begin to question the motivation and actions taken by them. This investigation, as long as it continues to hang over our city and community, will prevent us from moving forward to deal with the issues impacting our community. These investigations cast a shadow that impacts our ability to attract talent and businesses.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Our crime rate and the recent investigations have been detrimental to our reputation and our community is currently experiencing an identity crisis. Businesses are less likely to relocate and invest in a community with a high crime rate because of the potential economic loss. They are also unwilling to enter into negotiations with leadership that is currently embroiled in a criminal investigation. As far as identity, Leon County is simultaneously trying to be a retirement and an entrepreneurial community. Until we establish a clear vision for our community, we cannot create an identity that attracts business and capital. We should be establishing a niche economy that takes advantage of our available resources, such as the MagLab. This niche will help create a hub that attracts businesses and talent to our community.



10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?

By 2024, Tallahassee will have experienced a significant reduction in crime and public trust in our leaders has been restored. Our community has improved talent retention by implementing effective internship programs. There has also been a drive to improve fiber optics in our community, which has turned Leon County as great location to tele-work. Functional consolidation and effective management have reduced the cost of living in Leon County. Expenditures in infrastructure have laid the foundation towards smart growth. Through coordination between our government, universities, and private sector, intergenerational wealth has increased. This has helped address the socio-economic divide in our community. By 2024, Tallahassee has established reputation as a thriving and compassionate community.



Tallahassee City Commission Seat 3



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Lisa Brown, Tallahassee City Commission, Seat 3

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

My top three priorities are ethics/transparency/accountability, crime, and economic vitality. In addition to these, I would identify unclear policy and regulation, specifically to make the permitting application process more defined. I will work to expand airport service and the retention of existing Tallahassee businesses. I have earned the reputation as a turn-around CEO and that experience will uniquely support these initiatives.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

We need to tap into the globally competitive Mag Lab at Florida State University, creating a hub for research and development like the Raleigh-Durham area. We need to create a healthy culture of pro-growth and pro-jobs while still respecting the uniqueness of Tallahassee. As a third-generation Tallahasseean that was born and raised here, I am uniquely ready to accept this challenge.

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

The high crime rate directly impacts the ability to support local businesses and recruit others to the area. My experience working on Affordable Housing boards combined with my track record for bringing \$15 million in economic vitality to the Southside/Frenchtown area speaks to my ability to move the needle. In 2016, my credit union was one of 23 in the country to receive a grant from the US Treasury Department to provide access to affordable financing for car loans - so folks can get to and from work - for low income families in the Promise Zone.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

I fully support the evaluation of Consolidation efforts. I look forward to examining the report



that the Chamber finalizes in the coming months. I am concerned about the public's willingness to proceed with this initiative, so communication of the vision will be critical to the success of this effort. We will need to pay attention to gentrification and listen to members of the community to assure that this effort doesn't have unintended consequences in regards to economic segregation.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

I would spend the next couple of years evaluating cost saving measures before supporting a tax increase to fund children's services.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

We need to continue to support initiatives like Domi and relationships with our Universities. We need to continue to support micro finance and grant programs through the CRA. We need to explore innovative private sector/university/government partnerships. One example could be a partnership between FAMU, private engineer firms, and the Navy.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

The FBI investigation constitutes a challenge, not a crisis. The crisis has come from public perception vs. reality. We have work to do on both fronts. We need to assure that the foundation of ethics, transparency, and accountability has been solidly built. The independent ethics board needs to present policies to the Commission that need to be adopted without modification in order to assure the important "independence". We need to be sure that policies are universal for all at the City - staff, management, and elected officials.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

I used to teach Marketing at Florida Community College of Jacksonville. Brand image is critical. We need to act swiftly to implement ethics reform and begin working on brand image initiatives behind the scenes so that we are ready to roll when the FBI investigations are complete.



10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?

No doubt about it, Tallahassee is perfectly positioned for sustainable and remarkable growth. In 2024, I see Tallahassee being recognized as a center for innovation and research. I see us with a diverse and thriving business community. We will live in a place that my children will choose to live in, not because it is home, but because they have economic opportunities available, the cost of living is competitive, and they enjoy a quality of life that is second-to-none.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Richard Garzola City Commission seat 3

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

I would help collaborate the Public/Private & Non profit Business sectors

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

Communicating a bridge of retention n our talented graduates and our businesses here is the first step as well as opportunity to grow self made business

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

Bring ethical, transparent, and unapologetic leadership to the community to brng a sense of home. Innovative ideas that bring prosperity to all by working with everyone through communication then local government can succeed.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

The needs of people are different and statistically we have voted this idea down everytime becuase more than 80% of the time in other cities consolidation has failed.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

I support anything that will help move our children and future forward as we will benefit most from it in the future and we can sacrifice now to prosper in the future, there are statistics that prove the tax percentage isn't as large as it seems as well.



- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

Approve more loans for startup local businesses , create programs for such individuals who have been rejected for CRA grants but had great ideas for lesser grants , and communicate with students to not leave with innovative ideas and bring business elsewhere but retain it in Tallahassee.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

There is not a crisis in our community but overblown media coverage. There are hundreds of employees in city hall and if one or a couple individuals are acting unethically then they can be removed through a culture change and new leadership. Its simple and can be corrected.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Tallahassee is known as a collegetown to outsiders , goverment operated led city to many , and for residents its just home. Economic development may be boosted on one side of the city and lacking on another , I would describe our reputation as redeveloping the economy in certain areas but not everywhere. We identify our economic development hand and hand with our crime rate and public safety.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

A diverse , compassionate , and thriving innovative Tallahassee that has a workforce that matches its people. The booming city that has reduced crime , environmentally sustainable and economically viable for all its citizens.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

1) Name & Seat you are running for:

Jeremy Matlow - City Commission, Seat 3

2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?

As a small business owner I know first hand the struggles upstart companies face here. For me, the first time navigating the permitting process was miserable. Six years later, I have met with business owners that feel exactly the same way. I met with a young woman trying to get a project off the ground and she came to me and said, "Jeremy, I'm 26, I love this community, but I don't feel like the City of Tallahassee wants me here." I would focus on breaking that cycle and perception. It starts with a customer service focused approach for everyone that walks in the door with a good idea. A clear description of what is required to open a business here on our website and a Liaison position that can walk a newcomer through the process step by step. Then, we need to take feedback and survey every business that has gone through it, so we can have concrete data as to what are shortcomings are and how we can improve.

3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?

We need good paying jobs and industries. As a government we are most in control of infrastructure: companies and workers are looking for cities with affordable housing and reliable mass-transit. A strong Arts/Culture/Hospitality scene is another driving force to retain talent and attract tourism. Other than recruiting more jobs, we need to double down our focus on the people that are already here-- building from the ground up. It's a shame to see anyone go start a business in another city because they didn't find support here.

4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?

This has been a cornerstone of our campaign since day one. Growing up in Tallahassee and living in both high poverty and more affluent neighborhoods the stark difference is very clear. This should be the number one focus of the CRA. Investing in neighborhoods that haven't seen opportunity in decades-- in public space, sidewalks etc. Then we need to look at how we can recruit smaller projects and assist business growth of the people that are already living in these areas. These are the types of projects that will reuse existing structures, create jobs and



hire people from the neighborhoods that they are built in. As we proactively work to create opportunity in these areas for at-risk youth and returning ex-felons, we will see the crime rate go down.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

I think there is too much concern in the community about what representation will look like under a new system compared to what we have now. There is a lot of improvement that can be between the two governments and that should be the main focus for the immediate future.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

I'm going to support the CSC because there is a clear need in our community especially in regards to early childhood education and mental health services. Having a clear budget that can only be used for those purposes and a council focused on the issue is good in the long run and will save money. When we talk about making our community better and safer this is a good investment. As for tax increases-- I'm a supporter of spending money wiser. As a small business owner my paycheck comes from every dollar I don't spend. As we add a tax for a council that has a clear, demonstrated purpose, we can still look for savings in other areas.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

It starts with creating a culture that makes people feel welcomed doing business here. That's within government and increasing network and co-working opportunities like we see at the Chamber and incubators like Domi Station. And again, investing in the infrastructure businesses need to succeed here-- improving our airport, affordable housing and reliable transit.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

No, I don't think our community is in crisis. We have some individuals that have engaged in unethical behavior. I think if you're still with the City and you know you've done something



wrong, you should step down so we can get back to the business of restoring Tallahassee's image and regaining public trust as soon as possible.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

We are a town known for having a great community, easy commutes, excellent outdoor activities and a small town feel with big city amenities. Crime, economic segregation and corruption at city hall have tainted our reputation, but with this election, a new mayor and two new commissioners we have the opportunity to turn around the perception very quickly.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

A city with a thriving locally-owned business economy and industries that bring wealth into the city from other areas. We would create a municipal fiber-optic broadband network to keep up with connectivity and increase our renewable energy. We would be a city that continues to respect our natural resources and Tallahassee's charm. We will have a lot more people engaged in city government, bringing more ideas to the table about how we should grow and really become a city that works for everyone.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Bill Schack-City Commission Seat 3

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

We need to reduce the burden that permitting plays with new business and give more opportunity to new businesses to start. Organizations like Domi station can certainly help develop ideas, and help fund projects.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

I do not believe building nice apartments downtown is the way to do it. We must address public safety first before we try and keep people in Tallahassee. In addition, we must reduce airfare from Tallahassee. Graduates would love to stay in Tallahassee, but having to pay \$600 to go home for Thanksgiving and Christmas just may keep a graduate from staying in Tallahassee.

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

I think putting a law enforcement program back in school would be a great start. In addition, using the Southside CRA for what it was intended can help build better neighborhoods.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

Unfortunately, it would be impossible to consolidate Government. However, we should be working very hard to consolidate the processes and programs within our government.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

Absolutely not. We have a process called the CHSP process which gives funding from the City or



County for organizations who apply. We should find the extra money within our huge City Budget. Property owners should not be responsible for addressing "dire" childrens issues ignored for years by the current City and County Commission.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

We need to use the CRA properly, we need to have ethical business practices. We must stop the restrictive permitting process that slow business expansion. I mentioned earlier that we should support the work at Domi Station.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

Absolutely. However, if we continue to allow City Vendors and City Lobbyists who do work with the City to moonlight as Political Consultants and Campaign Managers, this will continue. In addition, we must elect Commissioner who are unconnected to any of the City insiders or do business with the current climate of crisis.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

I am not sure how we continue to get awards for City initiatives, as an FBI investigation hangs over the City. Our reputation for "feel good" projects is terrific, but only 5 minutes from our Solar Farm, we have some of the poorest neighborhoods in our City. Something has to change, and that is leadership.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

I think we should proudly hightlight our past, good and bad, because that is what makes our Community. Maybe our City should embrace such an incredible birthday, such as all letterhead should show some kind of logo, all the buses decorated, decal on police cars and fire trucks, and a big parade.



Tallahassee City Commission Seat 4



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Norris H. Barr, Mayor City Commission Seat 4

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

I would develop collaborations between let's say the National Magnate Lab and the schools of Engineering FAMU and FSU for the development of advance technologies, as well as Solar technologies thereby developing future jobs for all.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

Economic Development which will bring appropriate jobs that would keep our best talented people local and to diversify our tax base, instead of just being centered around government and education

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

Again, my answer would be centered around economic development in the creation of jobs. Community policing, jobs, and making sure all students have a viable trade would reduce crime significantly. I feel it's incumbent that state, county, and city governments should come together and develop a strategic plan to address joblessness and poverty.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

I am doing more research on this matter based on letters to the Editor, and my need to be accurate in my assessment.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**



This is another area where additional research is needed on my part, as I don't want to burden the business community unless their quantifiable need.¹

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

I would develop a Small Loan Development Program, as well as a Bond Waiver Proram that would assist women and disadvantaged businesses by not requiring bid bonds on selected low risks projects. I believe there may be a need for a prototype business incubators well as offering tax breaks for businesses that relocate here.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

I would have to say yes, based on the many people affected, and the perception of corruption and collusion. The Bible says to move away from the very appearance of evil.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Our reputation is a tainted one of "pay for play", and while we may not like it, we must address it quickly and move on with the more pressing issues of the City. The silver lining in all this is that ordinary citizens have been moved to change the perception of corruption in our City by running for office. There will be three new faces on the City Commission. With that comes a new vision in economic development projects, growth management, crime reduction, and finally taking on the issue of economic segregation and bringing about economic parity.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

A great celebration with parades, neighborhood celebrations, town hall neighborhood forums on making Tallahassee the Best for the next 200 years and what does our part as elected official and community partners look like



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

1) Name & Seat you are running for:

Dustin Daniels, Mayor

2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?

- Work with university partners to collectively drive job growth, business development, and increased economic opportunity. - Create a business navigators program, to guide local businesses through government processes on a one-on-one basis. - Create a weekly round-table with developers, staff, and elected leaders to rapidly address permitting and development issues. - Make cuts to utility start-up costs for small businesses, and introduce a rapid refund system for business customers. - Work with state, local, and educational institutions to lower barriers for local entrepreneurs and companies to do business.

3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?

We need to grow private industries that require or covet higher education degrees. We can also continue to make Tallahassee a supportive place to build a start-up or small business by working in partnership with private partners to develop capital investment funds to assist early stage and growing companies.

4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?

Local government should achieve equity in the way that public dollars for infrastructure are spent in areas that have been systematically neglected. We need to add to our economic development toolkit, and develop programs that allow for free community college and vocational/technical training for high-demand, high-wage industries. We also need to have a crime strategy that includes assessing and assisting the employment, mental health, and substance abuse support systems for former criminal offenders, 1000 of which return to our community from incarceration every 18 months.

5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?



I do not support political consolidation, and have never seen rigorous and academically sound research that has shown this policy approach to produce better outcomes for its citizens. I would be interested in learning more about areas where functional consolidation could take place between City and County, like in permitting or animal control, but again would need to see an informed perspective on those issues.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

Yes. The disparities that face children and families in our community are absolutely unacceptable. I support a Children's Services Council, but not necessarily because of its taxing authority, but because of its ability to serve as a clearing house and central command for human services in our community. For too long has local government funded programs without knowing the return on investment it was achieving. CSC's allow for more thoughtful and evidence-based approaches to community challenges.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

I believe OEV is too bureaucratic and top-heavy, and that the leadership in that office should be given the freedom to work with a wide variety of independence as it relates to our economic development goals. I believe we need to support the development of public-private capital investment funds for new start-ups, workforce development programs that remove barriers facing people who need to attain skills for high-demand jobs, a more focused approach to business recruitment that focuses on specialized industries that we are competitively placed to attract, and a more robust business retention and expansion effort that works continuously with local businesses as they grow economic opportunity from within, including through programs that help connect these businesses with national or international businesses opportunities.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

I believe the allegations we've seen are serious, and that any wrongdoing that has taken place should be addressed to the fullest extent of the law. I do also believe however that we cannot allow the actions of a few people to paralyze our community as we attempt to move forward on our greatest challenges and opportunities. To address the issue of public trust, I have recommended several policies including a ban on campaign contributions from city vendors, a



ban on local electeds from lobbying the government when they leave office, and a stricter penalties for individuals or organizations that lobby before the government without registering as lobbyists.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

I believe we have a lot of work to do to build a brand that inspires confidence from our local residents and the outside world. I believe we are a City of builders, and we must continue to double-down on the institutions and leaders that are helping to show that new ideas, new companies, new social movements, and new technologies can and are being advanced here in the Capital City.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

My vision is for Tallahassee/Leon to fully transition to a true 21st Century City that works for everyone. A place that relies on its local innovations to create equitable economic opportunity, its local culture, diversity, and history to allow retirees and graduates to choose to live here, and that more intentionally leverages the talent and ingenuity of our people in business, the arts, and education to show the world that what happens here, changes the world.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

John Dailey, City Commission Seat 4 - Mayor

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

As Mayor, I would work with the Chamber to make sure all of our local businesses are fully aware of the economic programs available to them on the local level and help facilitate all conversations when appropriate. I would also be a positive supporter of all local businesses and help them grow.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

Jobs! We need to proactively recruit new businesses in the previously identified target areas to our community.

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

As Mayor, I intend to create a culture of economic prosperity. Crime and economic segregation are directly linked to employment or the lack thereof. We need to create new economic opportunities and put people back to work.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

As Chairman of the Leon County Commission, we passed two 7-0 resolutions stating we are willing to work with the city to functionally consolidate departments where appropriate. I will continue to look for these opportunities as Mayor. I also believe the community is interested in the final report of the Chamber's study on this subject.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**



I believe the process in place will allow the community to fully understand what is being presented. Yes, I support the CSC.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

I believe we should proactively recruit new businesses in the identified targeted areas to our community. We have not been aggressive enough. I also believe we have great opportunities to utilize the resources at FAMU, FSU and TCC to support startup companies.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

As Mayor, I'm prepared to move our community forward and work in a positive coalition as a member of the City Commission, and with the County Commission and School Board to move our community forward.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Not good. We need to let the world know Tallahassee is open for business, and this is a wonderful community.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

Currently, the City of Tallahassee does not have a strategic plan. As Mayor, I want to help create our vision, bring the community together and work in a positive coalition to create our 5 Year Strategic Plan. Our community has so many wonderful assets and potential. We need the right leadership that will allow us to grow together to accomplish our goals.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Carrie Litherland and City Commission Seat 4, Mayor

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

I want to focus on local/small business. Looking at DOMI for inspiration and creative thinking on how we can drive local talent and recent grads together to foster an innovative community. A new idea I want to explore is a shared manufacturing warehouse. We have tons of startups from local talent that are sending their ideas to be made outside of the city and even the state. I would like to explore the idea of fostering a shared manufacturing warehouse, leasing smaller spaces to the new startups. I would also like to address our airport and make it affordable to do business here. I also want to really utilize our airport and explore the idea of a distribution center. This way we aren't asking Google to come but creating our own multiple many 'googles' or 'apples' from talent that grew here.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

We need to give up on an 18 hour downtown. Downtown is overrun by businesses/lobby firms that are only utilized a portion of the year. The ship has sailed. We can continue to promote growth that speaks to those working downtown but we need to set our eyes elsewhere in terms of making our community attractive. First we need to make sure this is a safe and affordable place to live. Second we need to bolster up on our arts and culture. Third we need to become the leader in ecofriendly alternatives. Fourth I would like to push local business/restaurants/entertainment in midtown. The area is proven to be attractive to recent grads and young professionals and we need to capitalize on it. I also want to see what we can do in terms of transportation. Big cities that are attracting our grads have a very user friendly transportation system that is USED. Right now we have neither. I would like to change that with current App technology and refocusing our routes. As a recent grad myself I want somewhere I can raise a family and grow professionally while still being able to enjoy life and live a little. We accomplish those things and people will stay.

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**



For the first and last I believe we need real mentorship programs and networking opportunities that are free to our folks living in poverty. Additionally programs like TEMPO need to be pushed because they are working. Using the CRA in the way it was intended to be used would also help this issue. We have been focused on the tax revenue piece for too long and we need to start focusing on using the money to uplift our community. On the high crime portion of the question, I am advocating that we double down on community policing efforts and build trust between our TPD and communities. I am interested in a community advisory board on public safety.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

I think it begins with cooberation. The more representation we can offer our residents the better opportunity they have to be heard. We need to take a hard look at what services are best left separate and which ones could be better utilized with a joint effort.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

I do believe there is a need for children services. However I would want to know more. The way I put it is a child would never ask a parent for an increase in allowance without a detailed explanation as to why they need more. I also think that with this we might be able to cut our own costs depending on what services are provided by the new council. I think there is still much to learn about this before I am able to say if they demonstrate an actual benefit.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

As I have said in previous answers, I want to promote a local business economy by creating clear and easy ways to start, providing space for them to grow and produce. I believe Proof is the exact model of what we should be promoting. Local homegrown talent that started off small and are now a driving force of economic growth for our community.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

A crisis might be too far but it is a big deal and needs to be addressed. Our local government has



lost the public's trust and we need that before we can accomplish anything. The culture needs to change. No longer can the political elite and developer run our city. The wonderful women and men who work hard to provide services to our community are not horrible people nor are they lacking ethics/morals. They have been misguided by their leadership in understanding what is acceptable behavior and what is not. I believe the hardworking people are hungry for new and better leadership.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Easily bought, elitist, and high-crime. This is a shame because that is not a true reflection of the community I know and love. We should be known for innovation, rich green safe neighborhoods, inclusiveness/acceptance, and a place to grow professionally and personally.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

By 2024 I want to be leading the pack in innovation, renewable energy, a fun and safe city to live in and resources for personal and professional growth. I see an economy based on local and small business of all kinds from tech to pillows.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

1) Name & Seat you are running for:

Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda for Mayor of Tallahassee

2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?

Work with the Chamber leadership and membership to find ways to build business and strengthen business. Some of my best proposals in the Florida Legislature came directly from constituents and working with stakeholders and a diverse coalitions to get things done is what I like to do and have been successful at getting bills and amendments passed and initiatives that been successful at making positive change happen. My experience in state government, my relationships with folks in D.C. my network around the state, my track record for innovative ideas to help promote economic vitality statewide, from working on film and television tax credits to fully collecting internet sales tax to help create a level playing field for brick and mortar businesses, to my bill and now community proposal to locate a statewide ethics center here that would bring even more "government tourism" are all ideas that are part of my track record that can prove viable to strengthen local business. I also would focus on the airport as I did over my years in the legislature but with more direct oversight as part of the city commission, I can effect positive change. I have spoken with the Governor on ways to help the Capital City's airport grow, also spoke with Governor Crist over the years and will continue to reach out to whomever is our next governor and the legislature to help make our airport a great one with more and cheaper flights in and out. Landing fees have been a troublesome issue and I pledge to make a deep dive on this issue to see what can be done. I am also open to an airport authority having worked on such a proposal during my years in the legislature. As for permitting: we must dedicate the resources to make it streamlined and "user friendly". There is no excuse for not dedicating such resources. Also, I have a track record of always putting people over politics and will not be shy about reaching out to friends of either party in the legislature, the governors office, Department of Economic Opportunity or Enterprise Florida. Find ways to leverage our National Magnetic Field Laboratory, The Power Group at FSU, and the Electric Ship Research and Development Consortium to encourage and make way for commercial ventures to locate here to take advantage of our talented and well educated work force. We have such rich human capital, so many good ventures like Domi Station, the renewed Innovation Park and many other components that include our excellent institutions of higher learning, that with the kind of leadership and energy I will bring to bear, the motivation, the connections, the knowledge, experience and vision, we can till fertile ground that will grow good and innovative new businesses and strengthen our local business scene. I am ready to roll up my sleeves and get started to take



all the wonderful resources we have and market Tallahassee as a place to plant and grow great business!

3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Our city has in the last few years attained a bad reputation for cronyism, crime, and corruption. That must be faced head on. We need to take a bold stand to take that reputation and the facts that led to it and turn it right around clearly and decisively. The Consolidated Dispatch Agency is dangerously hanging by a stressed thread with no permanent leadership since February of 2017. Low pay, high turnover, lack of leadership and training, technology problems have plagued the agency. We are one disaster or tragedy away due to some of these problems from a further stain on our reputation. These are fundamentals that must be addressed. First things first. The city budget must be vetted from top to bottom to focus on these fundamentals of safety, security, and integrity. A Conflict of Interest Checkpoint on the city's website where an easily accessible crosscheck of vendors, enhanced form-6 financial disclosure forms of commissioners and high level staff, campaign contributions, lobbyists, various advisory board members and city employees or vendors who are relatives of city officials are listed. (Better yet perhaps we should consider an outright ban of nepotism?) Create an independent inspector general fashioned after F.S. 20.055, a high profile annual conference on Ethics in Government and the Private Sector could put us front and center on the map for the best reasons, that we have taken our recent harsh lessons to heart and made Tallahassee a place of excellence for ethics and integrity. Working with various stakeholders to locate a statewide ethics center here would also be a great way to begin a new era in Tallahassee, one of prosperity built on the firm foundation of integrity. On another note, we need to solve the connectivity problem. There is so much to do in Tallahassee, so many great people, so many wonderful resources, we need to leverage all that and make sure people are connecting with one another are aware of all that is going on in Tallahassee. Some of that is indeed being done and I am excited and energized by it; the Chamber is a big part of that but we have a long way to go. I love to connect diverse groups, to build coalitions, to connect "dots" and help empower people and entities to reach their full potential, and have a track record to prove this. Once we get the fundamentals of safety, security, and integrity and leverage and connect the many resources we have, the sky is the limit for the Capital City of the 3rd Largest State in the Union with the best and most well-educated people in the state!

4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?

To lower the crime rate we must address the recruitment and retention issue we are facing with



TPD. This is not simply a local problem. Recruitment, hiring, and retention of LEO's is a nation problem and we must ready to compete for the best and brightest. We are already lacking the requisite number of TPD officers and about 30 officers are in drop. Well trained, highly ethical TPD with high morale and great leadership is a first priority. Folks in poverty need good job opportunities. If we bring more business into Tallahassee, to include manufacturing then those people who are in poverty can have the opportunity to be mentored, trained, gain an education, and be employed. Good jobs bring hope. Hope creates motivation and inspiration. We have a bounty of non-profits and people who want to help others in need in our city. I would like to take an inventory of all those non-profits and agencies devoted to helping people in poverty and in crisis and leverage and find ways to multiply the power of those entities to work more closely and more effectively and efficiently together. I would also like to make sure that we are maximizing opportunities for state dollars and federal grants or other grants. Local government should provide leadership, leverage, vision, and be a bridge to connect the community but local government is not a social service agency in and of itself. My idea of local government, city government, is to find the political will to build human and built infrastructure so that the people the government serves has a fertile ground within which to grow their dreams.

5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?

I am open to efficiencies that will be effective. I am open to consolidating but we MUST get right the most important consolidation piece we have already put in place: the Leon County/Tallahassee Consolidated Dispatch Agency is in tatters. We are all, everyone of us made vulnerable by that fact. We cannot in any truly responsible way go full-steam ahead with great and creative initiatives like Choose Tallahassee, if we don't get the CDA in ship shape order. There has been a irresponsible lack of leadership of both city and county commissioners with their lack of direction to the city manager and the county administrator to make the CDA a top priority. Politics and power struggles be damned the CDA is the beating heart of the health and safety of our community. Whether a heart attack, a Pulse attack, or a natural disaster, dispatchers are on the front lines to offer help in a crisis and get help to where it needs to be. Before we go further in discussions on consolidating other departments we must fix this. After that, I am all ears and would encourage either department by department consolidation or full government consolidation, if we can increase responsiveness and leadership of local government to the people, increase quality, efficiency and effectiveness of government services, and cut costs and taxes and make the Tallahasee Region an even better place to live.

6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?



No. Certainly not until we have an objective and independent needs assessment not brought forward by individuals or entities that have already expressed and interest in going forward with a CRC before such assessment was even thought of as a first step.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

Work more closely with state entities like Department of Economic Opportunity and Enterprise Florida. Reach out to the federal government for grants and programs to help. I read the most recent report of the OEV and it is long on strategy and obtaining a singular focus for our community, a central planning approach. I am not for that. My idea about the role of government in creating a robust economy is that it is responsible for the infrastructure on which people can build their dreams, not being the end all be all for the economy. I have two other criticisms of the present function and operation of the OEV: it seems to operate in a vacuum, or silo not reaching out past the borders of Tallahassee to work with regional, state, or federal stakeholders, and 2) there are no metrics to measure how well OEV is doing its job. I would propose changes to its mission and direction.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

Yes, I do. As I have said in previous entries we must meet this crisis of reputation head on. If there is a perception of cronyism, corruption and crime in local government and leaders of the community, too many folks on the street will take a cue that is ok to "get their" by any means too. I believe there is a nexus between the cronyism and corruption at the top and our high crime rate. We all talk about Tallahassee being a small town; people talk at dinner tables, out and about, at barbershops and beauty salons. As we reach out for new residents, visitors, and businesses to locate here, we will not be attractive to those who want to live in a community where there is an aura of corruption. We cannot run away from the fact that this is happening; we must resolve to make this motivate us to do better. I have a sterling reputation for integrity and ethics that was only increased in the crucible of the legislature. I take very seriously my training as a lawyer to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. As mayor ethics and integrity and the fiduciary relationship with the people as their elected representative in local government would be duties I take very seriously and would always be top of mind.



- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Cronyism, corruption and a high crime has sullied our reputation but the fundamental architecture of a good, vibrant, place to live with many amenities, a wonderful natural environment, and conscientious, engaged, well educated, people is still intact. We have a great deal at hand with which to rebuild our reputation and I am eager to begin that process.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

A vibrant, beautiful city with a reputation of people of honesty and integrity and fair dealing. A place of exciting ideas and innovation. A place where excellent institutions of higher learning, training opportunities, a celebrated National Lab, world renowned energy and power consortiums and engineers make for great business and career opportunities. A place where small businesses and solo-preneurs have many prosperous customers to grow on. A place where great music, plays, dance, and all the arts in all their diversity can be heard, seen, and felt. An exciting capital city of a state that is pivotal in national security and international trade and that takes seriously the local government responsibility to partner in that. A place where young and old of diverse backgrounds can feel welcome and call Tallahassee home. A place where heritage and history is honored and where we are not afraid to face and learn from past mistakes to continual improvement and greatness. A place where our children and grandchildren will be beaming with pride to call home.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Joe West Tallahassee City Commission Seat #4 Mayor

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

By networking with the over 2 million Brothers and Sisters that belong to Veteran Service Organizations that I am active with.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

Solicit companies who have higher paying jobs to relocate to the Big Bend Area. Not subsidize construction and service sector jobs.

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

First and foremost bring transparency and integrity back to City Hall. Secondly Work towards getting Law Enforcement and Community leaders to work together to raise the level of trust and cooperation between law enforcement and members of the community you've identified above.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

Consolidation should be viewed in the context of what services are being duplicated. Consolidation may or may not be the right approach to better serving the citizens of both the City and the County

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

Not without first determining what programs for children we are already funding and what their performance is. Raising taxes for ANYTHING should be a last resort, not the initial option.



- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

I don't know what we are currently doing, but whatever that may be, it doesn't seem to be producing the desired results. See answers #2 & #3.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

I don't know if it raises to the level of crisis, but it certainly casts a pall over our City and definitely inhibits our ability to attract new jobs and businesses.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

The self serving actions of a very few people has tainted the perception of millions who only know what they see in National media coverage of Tallahassee. We are not viewed in a positive light by many.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

I can only speak for myself, these are serious questions and it is unrealistic to expect detailed and accurate answers with only the 6 hours given to reply. If the city of TLH replaces the current corruption related management with fresh personal who are passionate about cleaning up the mess we've been left with, there is so much good in and about this city that there is no reason we could not excel in industry, education and tourism by 2024. It is my goal to be the beacon of light in this city that leads us in that direction..



Tallahassee City Commission Seat 5



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Howard Kessler, Tallahassee City Commission Seat 5

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

Would work on increasing our infrastructure so that businesses wanting to relocate or begin here will have the needed infrastructure in place rather than waiting for it to be built.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

We must optimize the resources we have at hand. No other community has a medical school, a business school, a school of entrepreneurship, a state of the art hospital in many areas, and "The Mag Lab". That is because no one else has the mag lab. Our efforts should be to coordinate and optimize the working relationships between all those entities so that creative new job will develop and excite the graduating students from here and elsewhere to want to set their roots here because of the cutting edge jobs and development than will be here if we optimize those associations.

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

A serious community dialogue has to begin and continue between law enforcement and community leaders and organizations so that respect can be established between community and law enforcement. Local government has to be at the table and hopefully leading the community down this path. It takes recognition of the problem and a buy in by all parties, in order for a lasting solution to happen.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

First we need to fix and make sure that those portions of government that have been combined are working properly before any new areas are considered for consolidation. The benefits of



consolidation have to be shown in order for any future attempt for consolidation to be successful.

- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

Now this is on the agenda for 2020. During this period of time information is going to be gathered to show the pros and cons of the proposed tax. I want to see the information before making a decision. That is the purpose of the delay.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

Infrastructure and the permitting process would be the two areas that I would focus on in attracting new and old businesses. Permitting should be a friendly experience. Infrastructure has already been earlier addressed.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

There has been a loss of trust by the citizens in their government. Crises, no. Need for doing things differently and better, yes. Following the rules and ethical guideline is expected of our elected officials and governmental staff.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Tallahassee has received a black eye. Its reputation has been tarnished. This needs fixed and fixed fast. That is the main reason I am running for Seat 5 so that I can help work to restore the trust the citizens used to have in their government.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

I want to see Tallahassee/Leon County be well on its way to being a premier spot in Florida, the United States and the world as a cutting edge business community but especially cutting edge



medical community where new technologies are developed here and people from all over seek out our community as the place for their businesses and their quality of life. We have the resources. It is just a matter of coordinating those resources and getting our already existing resources working toward that goal. It is at our fingertips.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Robert Lotane, City Commission seat 5

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

We must both continue working to make Tallahassee an attractive place for businesses to locate, relocate, or expand to while also proactively reaching out to businesses to tell them our story.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

While we are very fortunate to be Capitol/government and college/university city we need to diversify our economy to retain/attract those who are interested in other potential sectors (technology, for example).

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

We need to work with those who are stuck in generational poverty situations to expose them to the overall economy and better prepare them to avail themselves of opportunities. If we avail ourselves of the brainpower available in Tallahassee this could likely be done with little or no budgetary impact. The good news is TPD and LCSO are making sound moves to reduce crime and they appear to be bearing fruit. These need to be continued and, in some cases, expanded. All of this needs to be coupled with an expansion of economic opportunity to provide jobs and careers for those who choose to try to climb out of poverty and/or stay away from crime.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

I applaud the chamber for studying this issue and look forward to debating it. Obviously, the devil-is-in-the-details but I am open-minded on the subject. Given the problems revealed in the past year (federal investigation/continued high crime) we need to consider alternatives and, perhaps, present and alternative to voters.



- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

Not based on what I've seen so far. Again, the devil-is-in-the-details, and the details have been lacking. I also don't believe the CRC model provides adequate accountability.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

I have long believed that while the EOV is important, we need to create a non--bureaucratic option. During recent discussions with Dr. Gary Ostrander, the research director at FSU, he agreed we need to bring on board a private-sector corporate recruitment specialist. He believes that such a person would have to be well compensated (salary plus incentives) and be given a substantial travel budget for both national and international travel. He believes it would cost us \$1 million over three years which I think is quite doable inside of a \$900 million budget.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

Crisis may be a bit strong, but we are pretty close. I believe Tallahassee is such a strong city that we can get through this. Clearly, however, ethics reform has to be job #1 for the next city commission. We will have to also engage in a serious PR effort to correct the bad optics caused by this and the elevated crime rates we have endured.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

This has been a problem. I have heard from distinguish business leaders that companies/corporations looking to locate here consider relations between county/city/universities are dysfunctional at best. This must change. We must work to leave our differences at the door and present a more unified front.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

I believe that we have not fully of our immense historical offerings to boost tourism. That is



why our campaign has created and is presenting the Talla-History Trail as a concept to better package and highlight our dozens of historical offerings. This is modeled on Boston's Freedom Trail and would be the perfect complement to our bicentennial. Additionally, it has minimal budgetary impact.



2018 Tallahassee/Leon County Candidate Survey

- 1) Name & Seat you are running for:**

Dianne Williams-Cox for City Commission Seat 5

- 2) The Chamber's Mission is to be the catalyst for business growth. How would you act as a catalyst for local business growth as an elected official?**

I would advocate and promote responsible growth that include citizen and business participation.

- 3) Retaining talent is a top priority for the Chamber. What do you believe should be done to make Tallahassee/Leon County a more attractive community for our future workforce?**

Talent retention is very important to me as well. In order to be successful in retaining talent we must provide career opportunities that pay livable wages and provide for equal pay. Diverse communities and world class schools will also help lure and keep families in Tallahassee.

- 4) Tallahassee/Leon County has been identified as an economically segregated community, a high crime community and place with high levels of poverty. What do you believe local government should be doing to change these circumstances?**

Local government is already working on these issues. Crime is declining due to collaboration between the different levels of law enforcement. The use of CRA funds will be used to help revitalize blighted areas to restore the sense of community. As an already engaged citizen, I believe that local government should continue to measure and monitor various incentives to diversify communities.

- 5) There have long been discussions and efforts made to consolidate the governments of Tallahassee and Leon County. What are your feelings about better aligning these entities for a more unified leadership approach to governance?**

I believe that this decision should be made by citizens, however we have experienced some functional consolidation of departments and it appears to work. Political consolidation requires more thought, study and public engagement.



- 6) The Chamber opposes tax increases unless there is a clearly demonstrated benefit to the business community. In 2020, voters will be asked to consider a tax increase to fund children's services. Do you support raising taxes for this purpose?**

If children are important, and they are, we need to develop a clear plan for helping them succeed in life. In order to be successful in this endeavor, we must pay for it. If we do not find another way to pay, then we will need a tax increase to cover costs.

- 7) The Office of Economic Vitality was formed as the official economic development entity for our community and has been in existence for two years. What do you believe our community should be doing to support startups, retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new business and industry to Tallahassee/Leon County?**

I believe that our community should advocate for and promote startups, small, minority and women owned businesses as well as other businesses. The use of major incentives such as training, education, mentorship should be offered to expand businesses.

- 8) The FBI has been investigating alleged public corruption with local government entities in our community. Do you believe these investigations constitute a crisis for our community?**

In my opinion, the biggest crisis in our community is the degradation of public trust. The fact that the FBI has found enough evidence to investigate simply add fuel to the fire.

- 9) When pursuing economic development projects and other growth opportunities, our community reputation and identity is a critical component. How would you describe our reputation and identity today?**

Our community is highly educated and we have a stable workforce because we are a capital city. We have a good reputation and we are on our way to a greater reputation, thanks in part to the citizens working hard to make it great.

- 10) In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will turn 200 years old. What is your vision for Tallahassee/Leon County in 2024?**

My vision for our city in 2024 is that the economy is steady and stable; the workforce is strong and earning livable wages; affordable housing will have been leveraged to create mixed use neighborhoods; crime will be at an all time low; and there will be no failing schools.