

1. Under the 2011 budget proposal presented by the county manager, the county would end that year with an \$84.3 million reserve or 34.3 percent of the projected general fund. Is this an appropriate reserve level?

NO / Maybe

This is a complicated question, so my answer may sound like doublespeak.

34.3% is not an appropriate target reserve level; the appropriate target is 15-20%.

However, because of current circumstances and known future events it is appropriate. The current circumstances are related to jail costs within the Sherriff's department, passage of the sales tax and a strategic delay in remodeling the Olathe detention facility (OADC). The voter authorized sales tax renewal in August 2008 provided a dedicated source of funding for the annual operating costs (\$15 million) associated with the expansion that doubled capacity at the New Century jail along with capital costs for a new crime lab, juvenile corrections services building and remodeling of the OADC. However, the OADC remodel project has been delayed for various reasons and thus a surplus of funds has accumulated because both capital and operating costs have not been incurred. The Sherriff has also made several strategic hiring decisions that have saved taxpayers money. The crime/arrest rate has been below historical levels the last couple of years taking some pressure off the immediacy of the OADC remodel as initially expected. Once the OADC remodel is complete and staffing for both New Century expansion and OADC is completed most of the excess surpluses will be absorbed over the next 5-6 years and bring the reserve to the target level of 15-20%.

The New Century expansion which I championed in 2005 following a study begun in 2004 was intended to resolve excess reserves to absorb initial expansion associated personnel startup costs and get us to a reserve level in the 15-20% range. It was anticipated that the 2008 sales tax renewal would support jail operations until at least 2014; this date is now likely deferred until 2016.

2. Should rural residents have the ability to stop a city's annexation through an election process?

NO

On its face this sounds fair, but there is more to the story.

Johnson County is different from most counties in Kansas, 95% of our residents live in our cities and about 60% of the land area in the county lies within cities. County wide taxation covers the costs for the city like services of road maintenance and police protection (via the Sherriff's department) in the rural areas not contained in our cities.

Rural (not living in a city) residents do not pay separate taxes for police and road maintenance which cost about \$9 million annually. Every taxpayer of the county "subsidizes" the local services for rural areas. Rural residents do pay for their fire protection directly. Under the present situation, if rural voters could vote on annexation,

they would essentially be voting for or against the having all residents of Johnson County subsidize their services. The majority (95%) of the county residents who live in cities would have no say in reducing their subsidy to a minority.

I support permitting rural residents to vote on annexation, if rural residents pay directly for their police and road maintenance and city residents get corresponding tax cuts, as I proposed in 2008. If there is no change to the taxation model as discussed, then I do not favor elections.

3. Do you believe changes are necessary in the current county charter? If so, what changes would you support?

YES

I support eliminating the current provision in the charter that the Commission Chair receive a salary 25% greater than district commissioners. All commissioners have the same 1-vote authority on the commission and should be paid equally.

I support non-partisan elections for Sherriff and District Attorney to match the election of commissioners.

I could also support making the Sherriff position non-elected similar to a police chief's in our cities.

4. Does Johnson County need a new courthouse? If so, would you vote to keep it in Olathe?

YES

The county has been studying the courthouse issue for at least 6-years. The studies indicate a new courthouse is needed to safely and efficiently administer justice. The courthouse designs have cost too much to move forward. I agree with the results of the studies, although the size of the project may be less than what was proposed in the study.

I support keeping the courthouse in downtown Olathe. However, there needs to be substantial revitalization efforts by the private sector and the city so that the courthouse is a tangible benefit to the community.

5. Would you support a ballot question establishing a tax for public transit (bus, rail, etc)?

NO - MAYBE

Possibly, but we have a long way to go before that happens as our transportation priorities are about more than just the modes in the question. Through public deliberation, our cities and county need to build a consensus on transportation issues before we can move forward on any kind of tax.

As a commissioner I worked for 3.5 years with our cities, residents and interest groups to create intergovernmental coordination and cooperation on transportation issues. Remarkably, all 20 city councils and the county commission approved the same agreement to create an institution for transportation coordination called the

Transportation Cooperation Council (TCC). The purpose of the TCC was to grapple with all transportation issues and build a consensus among Johnson County's elected representatives. Unfortunately, after I left the commission Chairman Surbaugh and Commissioner Eilert conspired with some elected representatives in cities to put the TCC into hibernation. Now, the commission is launching something called START, which is essentially a stripped down version of the TCC and which will suffer the same fate as every other initiative in this area because it will not resolve the divisions within the community. This issue has lingered for years with no progress and is a prime example of the leadership failure within the community and the county commission.

6. Should the county pay for infrastructure to support the BNSF Intermodal project in Edgerton?

NO

The county should support issuing debt for the project, but Edgerton property and residents should ultimately be responsible for paying for the debt. I do not support the county managing this project because this is a dense city type development best located and supported by a city.

7. Do you support keeping the current county manager?

YES

Yes, I worked with Hannes and think he was a good choice to continue the evolution of our county government into a true professional manager form of government as envisioned in the charter.

8. Does the county need an outer-loop highway running through western Johnson County to southeast Johnson County and into Missouri?

YES-MAYBE

If traffic projections support such an improvement, then I support the development of a toll road ringing the county. The new tolled ring road could alleviate traffic from interior highways and handle through traffic from the intermodal facility.

9. Do you favor increasing the county's sales tax rate as a way to take pressure off of the property tax?

NO

Taxes are taxes. Before we embark on any new taxes at the county level we need to convene sessions with elected and professional representatives of the cities to discuss overlapping or redundant services that could voluntarily be consolidated or streamlined to save tax payers money by giving them better value for existing taxes.

As a matter of policy and authority, I do think that the county should have additional authority to levy a voter approved sales taxes that are 100% dedicated for county services. Presently 1/3 of all sales taxes levied by the county (except for the 1/10 storm

water sales tax) are shared with cities making county sales taxes 1/3 higher than necessary for county government needs.

10. Should commissioners automatically receive the same pay increase as county employees each year or should that be a separate commission vote?

NO

No, there should be a separate vote to include commissioners in any pay increase. Furthermore, County Commission salaries should be reduced by over 50% to \$25,000 for all commissioners, this is on par with the salary paid to the Overland Park mayor. Reducing commission salaries will save taxpayers \$210,000 annually.