

**Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce  
Candidate Questionnaire**

**2025 Spring Election – Oshkosh City Council**

1. Please provide some personal background information.
  - a. Name: Brad Spanbauer
  - b. Occupation: Sustainability Director
  - c. List any community activities you are involved with: Member of City Sustainability Advisory Board, served on ad hoc committee for City Clearwells Project, steering committee member of Urban Ecology Oshkosh, conference committee member of the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance
  
2. What are your background and qualifications for this City Council position, and what value will you bring to the City Council personally? *I am a life-long resident of Oshkosh and two-time alum of UW-Oshkosh. I have been a public servant through my roles at UW-Oshkosh as a Lecturer of Biology and as a university administrator improving efficiency on campus and identifying ways to save UW-Oshkosh money. In the past year, my work with analyzing UW-Oshkosh's utilities and making changes to building temperatures has saved the university almost \$600,000 to date. It is this kind of fiscal realness that I will bring the role as City Council member.*
  
3. Please outline your personal top priorities for the City of Oshkosh and your plan for seeing these priorities realized. *1). Improved communication and transparency of city processes. I will work to ensure that city council meetings and the issues discussed therein are presented in another publicly accessible forum (perhaps social media) so that everyone can better digest the issues that impact all of us. 2). Improving efficiency to realize savings in within the city. I have already been involved in helping the city identify and assess some of its utility expenditures. Helping the city reduce its utility costs reduces the financial burden on all of us. 3). Data-informed decision making. Similar to my work in the utility-area, I will use my data-analysis skills to help improve decisions made around investments in key infrastructure that will provide general public benefits (roads, bridges, storm and water pipes, etc.).*
  
4. Several geographic locations within the city can benefit from attention to facilitate economic growth and development. Please identify and discuss what you consider to be the top two or three economic development priorities you will champion as a member of the City Council. *It is my understanding that there is significant interest to improve development along the riverwalk. While I support this, we need to do this smartly. I believe we can find a balance of developing businesses, housing, trails along the Fox River while ensuring that the space is planned for long-term viability.*

5. Municipalities across the State are moving to Fee for Service approaches to pay for the delivery of municipal services otherwise funded by the annual property tax levy. Do you support a funding approach like this? If so, what current city services would be appropriately funded as a Fee for Service? If a new Fee for Service is imposed, should property taxpayers receive an equal, proportionate tax levy credit? *I think the current model for providing basic services that everyone uses out of their taxes is appropriate (garbage service, emergency/fire/police services, road maintenance/plowing, etc.).*
6. The city established a stormwater utility in 2003 to manage stormwater run-off issues in the community. Residential property owners are assessed for one equivalent runoff unit (ERU). Non-residential property owners are assessed annual fees based on the amount of impervious space (parking lots and rooftops) to determine the amount of ERUs that exist on a parcel. The initial (annual) stormwater utility fee in 2003 was \$19.10 per ERU and grew to \$237.72 per ERU in 2023. While the increase was held flat in 2024, the fee increased another 4% in 2025 to \$243.84. Do you find this rate of increase acceptable? Do you believe that continued increases at that level over the next 20 years are acceptable? Please outline any ideas you might have to curtail the growth in stormwater utility fees. *Starting in 2022, I conducted an analysis of water rates for UW Oshkosh and found that the rate for water in was lower than the sewer rate cost. Similarly, storm water rates were also higher than in previous years. As a council member, I will continue to investigate this issue to understand what costs are driving the increase in storm water rates. Do they include total cost of ownership of storm water infrastructure? Are they accounting for the necessary service the infrastructure provides in helping us avoid costly flooding damages? Are these rate increases comparable to other local municipalities experiencing similar changes?*
7. There has been considerable confusion and discussion regarding the increase in Oshkosh residents tax bills following the reassessment process last year. Because the City is still out of compliance with the equalized values of commercial properties, the City must conduct another reassessment of all commercial and residential properties this year. In your opinion, what would be the best avenue for you as a city council member to communicate important issues such as this to taxpayers? *I have found a wealth of knowledge of the City Assessor's page on the City website, but I'm not sure many people know that it is there or where to look for it. This kind of communication about breakdown of where our tax dollars go is important information that city council members can help communicate regularly, and something I would be interested in doing. I think the current resolution to carry over previous year's valuations on residential and commercial while reassessment occurs, or allowing for a delay in implementation of new valuation for one group until the following year while the other is reassessed is a worthwhile solution that should be supported by the state.*
8. With a low unemployment rate and strong local economy, many employers report difficulty attracting and retaining talent. What is the city's role in attracting people to Oshkosh and ensuring that Oshkosh is an attractive place to live and work? *Maintaining aesthetics and offering public goods. Parks, trail systems, a diversity of restaurants, shops, and other businesses are all pieces of strong towns that help bring*

*more business and revenue into the community. I think anything we can do to help small businesses get started and stay in business is a worthwhile endeavor.*

9. A housing study completed for the City of Oshkosh in March of 2022 noted that Oshkosh is expected to grow by more than 3,200 residents by 2030, meaning the city will need to produce almost 1,700 new housing units. While Oshkosh has made significant progress in this area, there is still much work to be done. What do you see as the primary barriers to increasing the housing stock in Oshkosh? What will you do to address Oshkosh's need for additional workforce housing? *Primary barriers I see as someone who has lived in Oshkosh my entire life and rented from 2011 - 2025, is the cost of rent, the quality of "starter homes", and the general changes in cost of living. Affordable housing means different things if you are looking for an apartment vs. buying your first home. Average monthly rent in Oshkosh is \$1,195. While this is lower than the national average individual income in Oshkosh is around \$34,000, with household being around \$62,000. If you are a single person renting an apartment, especially in a newly-constructed building you are paying \$1,200-1,800, more than 40% of your monthly take-home pay. Newer apartment complexes need to be affordable. I am in strong support of building new, affordable single-family homes in established neighborhoods, if they match the aesthetics of the neighborhoods, because this will also increase the tax base. There needs to be a way to offer reasonably-sized single family homes for people looking to potentially buy their first home - but not at over \$300,000.*
10. If elected, how would you support the business community? *Living in Oshkosh for 36 years, I've seen many businesses stand the test of time, while others seem to come and go. Talking with local, small business owners and asking them what their needs are and how to support their growth is a great first step. I would also like to better understand how Oshkosh attracts new businesses to the city and what gaps we may have in business offerings that might allow the city to open up a niche for someone who may be looking to start a business in Oshkosh.*
11. What specific issue, challenge, or concern are you interested in solving while serving on the City Council and why? *Data-informed decision-making and communication. I think the more data we have on any issue, the more we can rely in the experts on the issues, and make sure that everyone is at the table from the start of the project will allow us to make better long-term decisions. I've worked on multiple projects that have yielded significant savings. These projects were successful because of my ability to bring people from across different departments, from inside and outside the institution together to work on and begin to solve the problem. Communicating what you are doing and why to your constituents is also incredibly important.*