



Candidate Questionnaire

2020 Primary Election

The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce strongly encourages engagement between elected officials and chamber members as a way to inform and to be informed on issues of interest and impact to the chamber community. Local non-partisan elections are a great opportunity to deepen our understanding of each other.

While the Chamber will not be making any candidate endorsements, we seek to inform our members and voters by engaging in dialogue with those interested in serving and representing our community. We'll offer a number of opportunities to do so in the weeks leading up to election day. The first of these is this candidate questionnaire.

We're inviting each candidate running for office on the 2020 primary election ballot (opposed or unopposed) to submit their response to the following questions in writing. These questions have been formed by the Chamber's *Business Advocacy Council*, a diverse group of business and community leaders, through a deliberative process with issues of interest and impact on our business community and our local economy in mind.

Questions and answers will be published unedited on the Springfield Chamber's digital news platforms including the chamber website (www.springfield-chamber.org), the chamber's online news *The Bottom Line* (www.springfieldbottomline.com), and in the *Member Connect* a weekly bulletin distributed via email.

If you wish to participate in this opportunity to inform and engage with the chamber community, please **submit your answers in writing no later than Wednesday, March 18th to max@springfield-chamber.org.**

Candidate Information

Full Name: Joe Pishioneri

Position Running for: Springfield City Council Ward 6

Campaign Email: Joe-Pish@comcast.net

Campaign Website (if applicable):

Endorsements (if applicable): Springfield Mayor Christine Lundberg, Springfield City Councilor Merilee Woodrow, Springfield City Councilor Sean VanGordon, Springfield City Councilor Steve Moe, Lane County Commissioner Joe Berney

Personal/Background

1. **Please provide a brief statement on your personal, professional and service record in service to and support of the business community.**

Occupation:

Owner, Security Certifications LLC
Springfield City Councilor, Ward 6

Occupational Background:

Retired Lane County Deputy Sheriff (31yrs)
Manager, Scotts Restaurant
Search and Rescue Volunteer

Educational Background:

Churchill High School, Eugene
Associates Degree in Criminal Justice, LCC

Current Governmental Experience:

Chair Lane Regional Air Protection Authority
Chair Finance and Judiciary Committee
Metropolitan Policy Committee
Springfield Police Advisory Committee
Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission
Springfield Economic Development Agency

Prior

Lane Council of Governments
McKenzie Watershed Council
Lane County Public Safety Coordinating Council
Executive Board, Travel Lane County
Springfield Downtown Business Group
Springfield Planning Commission Liaison

Business, Economic Development, Community

1. **In your view, what is economic development and why is it important to our community?**

It is the big picture. A community cannot thrive without a thriving business community. Businesses are the backbone to our entire economy. They provide most of the jobs at all levels of income. A strong worker base is needed to keep our businesses healthy and profitable. They go hand in hand. Another requirement to keeping our local businesses strong and the ability to allow new business into our city, is a city government that

listens. When confronted with new business ideas and needs for a growing our current businesses, our city staff MUST look at these and immediately be in the mindset of “okay, how do we get to a yes!” not, the old standard of, “well, you can’t do that because of that”.

2. What is your vision for Springfield, and what do you see as the three most significant challenges, opportunities, and solutions to achieving that vision?

- a. Continued moving forward in the direction we are headed. Roads, Housing, Encouraging Businesses to start here and maintain relationships with businesses that are already here.
- b. Biggest challenges include the development of Glenwood, making headway on our roads and updating our development code. I see these as our three biggest opportunities.
- c. Solutions:
 - i. Continue to work with developers that have shown an interest in the Glenwood area by leveraging Glenwood Economic Development Funds the best way possible.
 - ii. Develop infrastructure repair/replacement plan with date certain goals.
 - iii. Maximize the use of our citizens’ expertise to provide input to help us make informed decisions and policies.

3. What role does/could the Chamber of Commerce play in implementing that vision?

- a. Encourage participation by its members. We always hear the moment somebody from the business community gets “fed-up” with whatever they perceive the city is doing or not doing. If its predictable, its preventable. By participating in the myriad of committees and commissions that are available will go a long way to prevent many issues that bring our citizens to the “fed-up” point. Being part of the solution?

4. How do you plan to engage the business community in the city’s priority-setting and decision-making process?

- a. Every time I am engaging with a business owner, I encourage them to get involved.
- b. See above

5. What is your affordable housing strategy or policy proposal?

- a. I align myself with our, already council approved housing strategy. That is to focus on families with children. I was very vocal and a proponent of instituting SDC waivers for the construction of accessory dwelling units. I fully believe we cannot stop there. Our agency “partners” have fallen WAY short in helping the community accelerate the building of these affordable housing structures. As a MWMC commissioner, I proposed a system to legally eliminate the cost of MWMC SDC charges that were assessed on small homes. The method used to do that is not being used by the other agencies for reasons I have no clue.
- b. I am a strong proponent of encouraging new housing development at all price points. We cannot just “create” low income housing and expect things to be fine. The people living in low income housing are stuck. We need to have housing for which they can move up into so there can backfill. And so on up the price point scale.
- c. It’s not just housing. We need to help maintain/stimulate a climate that fosters business growth so more people will be employed, and current employees can move up within their jobs, earn more money and afford larger family sized homes. Which naturally creates that vacuum allowing lower income families to move up.

6. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of any proposed public infrastructure investment? Feel free to offer an example.

- a. By far the single most important infrastructure needs in Springfield is the roads. Just recently I was part of the decision to create a team of staff that will be on the streets targeting roads that need work the most. Their charge is to go throughout the city, identify specific site, prioritize and do the work. Literally where the rubber meets the road. They will be slurry sealing, doing overlay and stormwater runoff channeling. All the staff on that team will be dedicated to do just that work and nothing else during the roadwork “season”. We identified existing funding for that dedicated team for the next five years with no extra cost to the taxpayers.

7. How would you balance new construction with rehabbing, expanding, and better utilizing our existing residential and commercial spaces?

- a. We don’t. The market will do that. With the passage of new laws allowing greatly relaxed land use where Low Density House (LDR) zoning is now virtually Medium Density Residential (MDR), I see a lot of new housing in the future. New housing means more jobs which translates to a robust local economy at all business

levels. Everything from materials, vehicles, tools, family wages spent on local restaurants, recreation, hard goods, soft goods. Everything.

8. Do you believe major tax and fee increases should be referred to the voters? (some recent examples: safety, payroll, carbon or other emissions/climate tax, corporate activities tax, etc.) Please explain why or why not.

- a. YES – I have always stood firm in this area and will continue to stand firm. I have always referred to the voters to see what they want. For example, our fire levy and police levy. The Springfield voters trust us and that is of major importance to me. While I have been on City Council, Springfield has always lived within its means and I plan to make sure that continues. I am not happy with the new Eugene payroll tax to say the least. There are many Springfield residents that work in Eugene solely because there is a greater number of employment opportunities. Unfortunately, they are being taxed for services they do not benefit from. Transversely, there are many Eugene residents that work in Springfield and are not paying any taxes whatsoever for services Springfield provides to them. It is not fair, and I have been vocal about it.

9. What strategies or policies would you support to control government spending that effectively lessens the need to increase taxes, fees, or other charges.

- a. Its not always about “control government spending”. When you have an efficient local government, you need more.
- b. New construction of housing
- c. Higher valuations on current property and improving existing property:
 - i. Promote new businesses using whatever tools we have available
 - ii. Do whatever we can to help current businesses grow.

10. What would you do with an unexpected \$1m budget windfall, and why?

- a. Depends on if the windfall was dedicated funds. If not, I would first look to see if we had any debt service that if paid off early, we would see a savings in interest payments. If that was the case, I would look at the savings over time and use those funds for projects that have been put off for many years. Such as our publicly owned buildings that need repair to extend the useful life as opposed to the high cost of full replacement.

- b. Put it towards downtown enhancements that has already seen huge improvements. That money would propel those projects further.
- c. Look at Glenwood to see what can be done to continue the work already started.
- d. Use it for match grants working with ODOT making Main street safer for our citizens.
- e. Sounds like a lot of money but, in the whole scope of our budget it is not. Frankly, it would be difficult to determine how that money would benefit the most people. I wish I would have a chance to tackle that problem.