

Keys to the Candidates
Compiled by the League of Women Voters of Bloomington-Monroe County
for the
2016 General Election

Monroe County Commissioner, District 3

Amanda Barge (D)

Paul E. White, Sr. (R)

1. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking?

BARGE: Commissioners have executive and administrative authority. I have six years of executive and administrative experience as a business owner and fifteen years of experience as a counselor. In this professional role I work closely with health, government and social service agencies, our school system and our courts system. I've served on boards and commissions and as treasurer for a county board. I'm a lifelong resident, parent and a school volunteer.

WHITE: Farming, construction of all types, plumbing, equipment operator, logging, saw milling, Clergyman, architectural designer, map maker, Federal employee, safety investigator and instructor, bus, heavy truck and trailer operator, handyman. The vast variety of jobs that I have performed, both as an employee and business owner, show I have seen many of the issues first hand that the commissioners have and will continue to deal with. I enjoy helping people.

2. What are your top three priorities for your office and, if elected, how will you address them?

BARGE: The Board of Commissioner's priorities vary depending on resident and community needs.

I bring a commitment to the health and safety of our citizens, a promise to protect our environment and a dedication to making sure our government is efficient, transparent and responsive to the needs of the county.

I will collaborate thoughtfully and patiently with the other commissioners, use my professional listening skills to help resolve resident disputes, and work with community stakeholders to achieve goals. I will be in our community meeting people and asking tough questions!

I plan to meet with county employees; they're the backbone of our government and I want to learn from them ways on we can improve.

WHITE: A. Government that is better responsive to the needs of the citizens. Having open doors with hours available for the public to meet with the commissioners on demand or by appointment should be made, which will in turn allow more direct input into the operations of county government that affect their daily lives.

- B. Monroe County needs to be more business friendly, so that businesses will locate here rather than go elsewhere or even leave as many have done. Requirements with zoning, storm water retention ponds and taxation, should be looked at to see how improvements to those issues can be made.
- C. Operate a government that deals with abuses of power whether it is the firing of whistle blowers, or theft by elected officials or regular employees.

3. What services for individuals, families, and groups experiencing crisis and trauma do you feel are most critical to support and fund?

BARGE: I have made health a priority in my platform and bring fifteen years of experience in social work to the Board.

While the County Council bears fiduciary responsibility, the Board of Commissioners does provide some ongoing funding for local organizations and I would support continuing that as needed.

I would support facilitation of a successful national program like “First Aid Mental Health” to train First Responders across the county in assessing for urgent mental health needs.

And, as a member of the Syringe Exchange Advisory Board, we are working to address the addiction epidemic. We must prioritize prevention based programs that reduce disease and crime and treat those with addictions humanely.

WHITE: Youth Services Bureau: By continuing this we will continue to have better results with juvenile offenders at less cost than incarceration and they and even the families will get needed intervention and counseling.

County Veterans Affairs Office: Often the need for services isn't made known until an emergency or arrest transpires. Jailing offenders doesn't always help the veteran deal with ongoing issues.

Area 10 Agency on Aging and Rural Transit: Operating under the same umbrella they are funded separately because of function. Both serve the health and safety of the public. Area 10 serves an aging population with a variety of challenges. Rural Transit serves everyone in the county. Many of the clientele have limited mobility or other disabilities while others just need transportation.

4. What are the challenges presented by the proposed Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and how might these be met?

BARGE: The volatility of the recycling market, financial feasibility and public input are all important pieces of the discussion of whether to move forward with a Materials Recycling Facility. The county recently approved \$100,000 towards an outside consultant to review this issue.

As Commissioner, I would want to review the consultant's report, listen to residents and see a comprehensive and fiscal plan for the MRF to decide if this is something that would be

beneficial to taxpayers moving forward. If it is something that increases recycling and is financial feasible, then I would be in support of a MRF but I definitely want to go through all the steps before making a decision.

WHITE: Education is the key to success. People need reasons for changing habits. Many people still do not separate recyclables or compostable material from trash. A single stream MRF will separate types of recyclables, while a dual stream will also separate trash, with the latter going to a final disposable facility, either a landfill or incinerator.

How are we going to operate a MRF, should it be by the county or in conjunction with private enterprise? Enlisting an agreement with one or more of our nonprofit entities could be a very functional venture.

Should the MRF be built at the Anderson Rd. landfill site or a more acceptable alternative location with better egress? Water quality in the Lake Lemon ecosystem is one of the issues.

5. What are the challenges presented by the Monroe County Urbanizing Area Plan and how might these be met?

BARGE: The Plan improves on zoning and regulations; making them more predictable and consistent. If implemented well, it will bring positive changes to our county.

One challenge is how to handle buildings currently in the urbanized area who don't meet the new zoning requirements. Frequent communication and developing criteria for grandfathering is crucial.

I hope our community gets involved in this process. I have been impressed with the multi-faceted approach the county has taken to inform citizens and the push for discussion. I want to see more residents get engaged. There is a public meeting this fall and opportunities for public comment during this phase.

WHITE: There are many who live in this area that resent becoming annexed into the city. There needs to be a simplification of the zoning restrictions on the lands in the MCUA, for that matter the entire county. If the City of Bloomington wants to have a say in what transpires in the MCUA, then it should allow those citizens a say in what is to be placed upon them with their constraints by allowing them a voice with the ballot. Once upon a time in this country, a revolt started because of taxation without representation. Let those in the Urbanizing Area have their voice heard.