

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

**Monroe County Council at-large**

Lee Jones (D)  
Geoff McKim (D)  
Cheryl Munson (D)  
Hal Turner (R)

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

**JONES:** I have served on the Council the past 4 years.

I grew up here, spending half my life in Bloomington and the rest out in the County. I have a deep understanding of the people of our community and their concerns.

My husband and I own Stranger's Hill Farm, the oldest Certified Organic Farm in Indiana. As the financial manager I deal with budgets and recognize the need to balance expenses and revenues.

**McKIM:** Served on the County Council for the past eight years, president for four; earned a reputation for fiscal leadership. My council colleagues and I have consistently fought for a vibrant local community and effective county government, including:

- Funding for youth services and public safety
- Ensuring that our County compensation system attracts and retains good people
- Launching the County's active transportation system

Demonstrated commitment to fiscal transparency, and write a blog on local government finance (mocogov.com).

**MUNSON:** By statute, the County Council is the fiscal arm of county government, and my diverse experience in allocating funds and overseeing budgets plus working for my community is valuable:

- County Council (4 years);
- previously Township Board (16 years);
- research grants (42 years);
- 45-year resident of Monroe County, serving on county-wide boards, commissions, committees, and organizations; and
- I love Monroe County and want to continue working for a bright future for our children and grandchildren.

**TURNER:** I have 40 years of professional leadership and management experience spanning retailing, not-for-profit, small manufacturing, federal government and large supercomputer manufacturing. These experiences give me skills in communications, analysis, budgets, project management and human relations. I've seen businesses from both sides and so have insights into what questions need to be asked to get clarity and truth for myself and others. I also require action when I see incompetence, malfeasance and dishonesty.

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

**JONES:** The first responsibility of the Council is to yearly pass a responsible budget that funds the vital duties of County Government.

I am concerned about the State's plan to stop accepting level 6 felons at the DOC, and to return the ones that are there. To maintain a safe community we will need to increase the capacity of Community Corrections, and to add work/release to their programming. I have been appointed by the Judges to a task force to work on this problem.

As the Council's appointment to the Plan Commission I am excited about the new plan for the urbanizing area surrounding Bloomington. I am anxious to work with a consulting team to finalize the ordinances that will support this plan.

**McKIM:** Continue to develop responsible County budgets that balance available revenues, appropriate levels of taxation, proactive solutions to problems, and provide top levels of service to the public. This requires clear communication of budgetary goals, hard work with county department heads and elected officials, collaboration with fellow council members, and a strong understanding of county funds, revenues, and expenditures

Make strategic investments in our westside infrastructure to continue to generate employment for Monroe County residents and mitigate the impacts of I-69 on our local roads; continue ongoing work with the state, our Highway Department, and our Redevelopment Commission to obtain significant funding for these investments.

Fund increases in public safety, including additional sheriff's deputies, a sustainable 911 budget, and services to reduce incarceration and recidivism

**MUNSON:** Responsible budgeting for county services. Budgets are more than a once-a-year task. They are a continuing exercise in understanding community values and setting priorities. This requires open communication with the public, review of department performance, needs, and expenditures, examining revenue forecasts, asking hard questions, and sometimes saying "no."

Expanded public safety: Among all the services the county provides, security is the highest priority. The new Public Safety Local Income tax will fund County Emergency Dispatch

for fire, police and emergency medical services, but revenue from this tax may not fully cover our needs (additional Sheriff's deputies, work-release program, etc.).

Planning for future needs: Maintaining infrastructure and supporting economic development with needed county services; covering intermittent costs (e.g., elections); and providing employees with cost-of-living raises.

**TURNER:** I will help restore trust in our local government through an aggressive transparency of our proceedings. I will seek the truth behind the numbers and will be more than just a financial rubber stamp. The people you elect to the County Council should exercise as much scrutiny as you do when you write a check. Honest elected and appointed servants of the people should be as irate as the public at the betrayals of trust we have seen in the past year. Citizens need easy access to your elected council to allow critical responses. I will make myself available to the public at forums such as area Farmers Markets and the internet to allow in-person public input on county issues within the Council's scope.

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

**JONES:** Monroe Co. is experiencing an opioid problem that is affecting many of our families. They frequently find themselves in the Court system where any children experiencing abuse or neglect are required to have an advocate. CASA trains volunteers to support these children. The Council has been increasing its funding for CASA steadily.

The Binkley House Youth Shelter is funded by the Council and has been a very important resource for at risk children and their families.

The Council Increased the VA officer's position to fulltime allowing for more active outreach to Veterans and their families.

When the community's sober shelter suffered financial problems the Council helped to fund them.

Through the Sophia Travis Fund the Council supports many agencies that serve families in need.

**McKIM:** On the Council I have fought for:

Services for youth and families -- supported an increase in revenues that fund investments in youth services and juvenile courts. We provide positive alternatives to detention; and have provided increases in funding for court appointed special advocates for abused and neglected children

Problem-solving courts, including drug, mental health, re-entry, and veterans courts

Increased services for veterans; funding of a full-time Veterans Service Officer

Funding for Advanced Life Support ambulance

Funding for people with developmental disabilities, legislation providing regular increase to organizations that support these individuals

Emergency funding to keep Bloomington's sober shelter open following financial crisis

The Sophia Travis Community Services Grant program, which supports non-profits providing vital social services in the community

**MUNSON:** The County's Health and Emergency Management Departments serve important state-mandated roles, which the Council funds. Services for juveniles in crisis, and their families, have been increased which I have strongly supported. The Council also provided equipment for county-wide Emergency Dispatch Services.

While Township trustees offer emergency food, shelter, and other services to people in crisis, it is primarily non-governmental, community services entities – our local not-for-profit organizations and churches, and their amazing volunteers – who fill so many needs.

As a Council member, I have served the last four years on what is now called the Sophia Travis Grants Community Services Grants program committee. I will continue to urge increasing the amount of county funding available to help our organizations better help those most in need.

**TURNER:** Services that provide a combination of immediate crisis support and follow-on training or support to restore self-sufficiency are those I would support most strongly. If we invite someone into a program, there must be a clear path out of the program for them as well. Among programs that work are: Middle Way House where clients are provided crisis support, housing and life skills; Stone Belt where clients are given individualized care, job training skills and jobs; Boys and Girls Club and Big Brothers/Big Sisters where youth are given social skills training, education assistance and mentoring. Programs that do not show a way out to clients are socially unjust to me since they are trapping the clients in those programs without any hope of escape.

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

**JONES:** The Council does not have direct authority over the Solid Waste District, although there is a Council appointment (Cheryl Munson) to their Board of Directors. The Council reviews the Solid Waste District budget on a yearly basis to assess its impact on other county taxing units. Funds for any unanticipated special needs are appropriated by the Council.

For the Materials Recovery Facility to be financially solvent there will have to be a reliable stream of materials to provide revenue. The County may not generate enough, so an agreement with IU or Bloomington may need to be sought out. Some new equipment will be needed, and most likely more staff. There are also transportation and permit issues to be considered.

**McKIM:** The Solid Waste Management District is actually a separate unit of government, with its own property tax levy that is independent of other county and city tax levies. The District's seven-member board, which exercises governance over the District and its initiatives, such as the proposed MRF, includes only one member of County Council (currently Cheryl Munson) but includes all three Commissioners.

The council is required to review the budget of the District each year, as well as approve any additional appropriations requested by the District Board. The primary purpose of this review is to minimize the impact of the District's budget on other units of government. The challenges from the Council's perspective are sustainability--balancing potential increased staffing needs, increased transportation costs, and revenue instability.

**MUNSON:** Discussion about a MRF began at least four years before I joined the Solid Waste District Board of Directors in 2013.

Due to financial questions and site constraints, the Board decided to put a MRF development on hold in 2015. The Board recently approved contracting for a new evaluation of: (a) MRF operational costs and revenues with respect to available sites, and (b) costs of facility construction and equipment. A MRF should bring greater revenue for recyclables and less waste disposal, but it must also make good business sense.

The feasibility of a MRF depends on a reliable volume and delivery of recyclables. Recyclable materials from residential, business, and other sources in both the city and county should be considered in the new study.

**TURNER:** Bloomington is reported to have had a prior MRF that was sold to Republic who then shut it down. I'd like to know why that one was not viable, and how does this one differ? We do want to make sure that we hit the State's 50% goal for recycling of municipal refuse as stated in Public Law 126 (2014 – House Bill 1183), and we should look at bringing in recyclable sorting to apartments and business who currently do not do this to see if it is financially feasible. As far as the structure of the MRF, we should thoroughly investigate the SPEA Capstone Group Report on Bloomington Recycling (fall 2015) and their comparison of 5 city MRFs before hiring any more consultants.

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

**JONES:** The Monroe County Urbanizing Area (MCUA) was previously split into a multitude of zones. This plan greatly reduces them making it easier to determine how a parcel may be used.

The MCUA is already developed in many places. The challenge will be to encourage development that is appropriate to a location and the surrounding area. Mixed use is encouraged, but should be on a scale and with a design that fit in naturally.

The plan is close to completion but ordinances to support it must still be adopted. Because of the complexity of MUA I believe it is important to hire outside help with the ordinances. I hope the Council will be able to find funding for that in the near future.

**McKIM:** In county government, the Commissioners have jurisdiction over land use; the Council does have one representative to the Plan Commission (currently Lee Jones).

In 2013, the Council appropriated \$250,000 to hire a consultant to help draft the Urbanizing Area Plan (UAP); this, process has widely been seen as successful. I strongly support funding additional assistance in drafting the zoning ordinances to implement the UAP, which will streamline economic development in the urbanizing area.

There are also budgetary challenges presented by the development of the community reflected in the plan that the Council will have a say in, including:

- Public safety needs
- Required investment in infrastructure
- Annexation concerns--which can affect tax base, income tax distribution, and circuit breaker losses

**MUNSON:** Our county is growing, and we want it to grow in the best way possible. For the 32-square mile ring around Bloomington, the Plan has considered areas that will be needed for investment and economic development, residential growth, and expanding small businesses.

The Plan takes into account environmental constraints as well as infrastructure needs – services, schools, utilities, roads and traffic, and highway access. It divides this growth into multiple districts ([www.monroecountyurbanizingareaplan.com](http://www.monroecountyurbanizingareaplan.com)).

But the Plan is policy and will continue to be a Plan until zoning ordinances are adopted. It is important for these ordinances to attend to:

- protecting neighborhood values;
- consistency with levels of available services,
- encouraging attractive entryways into Bloomington, and
- providing flexibility for multiple uses in developments that are consistent with the policy.

**TURNER:** The MUA (‘‘the plan’’) is attempts to cover all of the possibilities that the future portends, however it is better suited for Epcot than Bloomington. While the planning process is somewhat streamlined over the current development codes, the plan reflects an ultra-progressive point of view for the county’s fringe that is not shared by a large number of the residents who will be affected. The penultimate focus of the plan for the future should not be to enhance Bloomington but to provide flexible opportunities for growth of many types, while respecting the right of owners to determine the characteristics of their properties with a minimum of bureaucratic interference. While residents can currently attend hearings, their input has little effect on the grand vision.