

Additional Questions from GGBA Candidate Forum

(in random order)

Written exactly as they appear on the cards submitted, not edited by GGBA board. The questions were posed to contested candidates ONLY as they appear on the ballot.

Responses received by the deadline from: Candidate for Delegate Mike Dreisbach, Candidate for Commissioner Judy Carbone and Commissioner Larry Tichnell and Candidates for School Board Rodney Glotfelty and Fred Gregg.

Responses were not received from: Delegate Wendell Beitzel and School Board Members Nathan Sorber or Monica Rinker

Delegate

- **With the funding formula for public schools being what it is, what other ideas do you have to try to find more money for Garrett County Public Schools?**
 - *Mike Dreisbach:* “There needs to be a complete review of the funding to allow all rural schools in less populated areas of the state to receive more dollars to build and maintain schools. The option always exists to increase taxes to support our infrastructure, and schools are one of those beneficiaries. I do think if the county had home rule that would be a way to leverage money for our schools.”
- **What is your position on the Oakland bypass?**
 - *Mike Dreisbach:* “The bypass was really on the ballot indirectly at last summer’s election. The current mayor and council want the bypass and a group of businesses does not want the bypass. Finally, the State has said there is no money to fund this bypass. Therefore, there needs to be a coming together of the users to continue to explore and fully understand the true pros and cons.”
- **What Garrett County spending priorities* will you pursue and how will you make them come about?**
**The spending priorities should include Garrett County Commissioners priorities request – please also include a projected amount to be requested*

- **Mike Dreisbach:** “We need to step up to the plate and fully fund high-speed internet with a bond bill and the county needs to borrow the money. We cannot waste four more years waiting for this to happen. When Amazon comes to the east coast there will be many new contractor businesses that will start up, but only in high-speed internet locations. As these new opportunities come to the county, our schools need to be upgraded and repaired. It is time for us to spend money even if it is new taxes to fund infrastructure.”
- **What is your position on home rule?**
 - **Mike Dreisbach:** “I have been studying home rule and do believe there needs to be a commission set up to study the impact for Garrett County and to let the voters have a say.”
- **Who are you supporting for Governor?**
 - **Mike Dreisbach:** “This is probably an election that I will not cast a vote for Governor. I really do not fully support either one.”
- **What do you consider the most important source of feedback for our citizens in order to make decisions based on us and our county’s needs?**
 - **Mike Dreisbach:** “I think community meetings on a regular basis to help the spread of correct information. Too much incorrect or partially correct information is spread via social media.”
- **Where do you get your feedback and information you use for decision making?**
 - **Mike Dreisbach:** “I look to a variety of sources for information. I will always try to research the topic and look at the pros and cons. I also will get the historical option and the future option before I make a decision. I use my business background and my professional mediation skills to help me understand an issue. Throughout my campaign I have had several listening sessions each week to meet with constituents in the community and understand their issues as well.”
- **What plans do you have for economic development to deal with the hiring and employment issues relating to the opioid crisis?**
 - **Mike Dreisbach:** “The opioid crisis is such a large-scale issue that in order to make a dent in the problem, we will have to look to the experts for their advice and guidance.”
- **What is your view on how Garrett County can position employers and workers to prosper in the renewable energy industry – wind/solar/batteries, etc.?**
 - **Mike Dreisbach:** “There will be a greater need in the future for service technicians in the renewable energy industry. Therefore, we need to work closely with the local community colleges to provide skills programs with apprenticeships. We need to work with our existing renewable energy companies to explore the skill sets needed.”
- **Several candidates highlight the fact that they are life-long residents of Garrett County and seem to use that as a campaign talking point against your opponents who were not born here. What message**

does that send to the people you say you want to attract to Garrett County? Will newcomers be treated differently from native-born Garrett Countians?

- **Mike Dreisbach:** “Today in Garrett County, one of our many strong points is the influx of new people coming from the outside who bring with them businesses and new opportunities. They come here to live, work, and play in this great environment. Many new opportunities have been created and business have relocated or expanded from people not born here. Jobs have been created and those people have added to our communities. While I was born in Washington County, I consider myself a Garrett Countian; this is my home. I would hope that those relocating here feel the same sense of place that I do.”

Commissioner

- **Economic development has been talked about the last several election cycles. What do you see as the biggest challenge and how do you plan to overcome it?**

- **Judy Carbone:** “It is hard to narrow down our economic development challenges to just one. The top ones that I see are a lack of high-speed Internet throughout the county, the lack of skilled workers who are looking for work, lack of incentives and support for new business owners wanting to come here or expand here, and the need to develop an entrepreneurial ecosystem for our young people.

That said, I think the most important thing that we can do to increase businesses and expand current ones is to provide high-speed Internet access to all areas of the County and prepare proactively for changes in wireless Internet that will happen in the next decade. Without such access, businesses will not invest in starting up here, our current businesses cannot expand, our children cannot be well educated, and our workforce will not be competitive. If elected to the Board of Commissioners, I will work towards a comprehensive solution for Internet access to all areas of the county, aggressively seeking state and federal funding and private-public partnerships that provide affordable Internet options.”

- **Larry Tichnell:** “Our aging population has made it difficult for our existing business and new business coming to our area to find skilled employees to fill their needs. We need to continue our scholarship program to make sure our high school graduates can continue to receive the training they need to fill these job vacancies and working with the college to offer new job skills and trade training. Encourage our younger population to stay in the county by offering programs such as the pathway to home ownership to help them with affordable housing.”

- **What is your position on the Oakland bypass?**

- **Judy Carbone:** “To be honest, I don’t know if the Oakland Bypass would be good or bad for the majority of our community residents. What I do know is that citizens deserve to know WHY elected officials who support the Bypass think it is good for our community...not based on speculation and hopes but based on current data. And I believe that citizens have the right to

ask questions of our local elected officials, express their concerns in a way that they know they were heard, and have their questions answered. Right now, it seems as if the rationale for the Bypass is based on data and projections that were compiled over a decade ago, and the last time a public hearing with our elected officials was held was also over a decade ago. That is not acceptable. It is incumbent on our elected officials to justify their support based on current data and to provide a public opportunity for citizens to be heard and to get answers. Without both, I can't see supporting the Bypass. The current Board of Commissioners seem to believe that there is nothing they can do if the town of Oakland wants the Bypass. I disagree wholeheartedly...not only can they do something to ensure it is the best decision for the County at large, but I believe it is their responsibility to do it."

- **Larry Tichnell:** "I support the mayor and town council of Oakland on their position on the bypass. I look back a couple of years where a tractor and trailer overturned in Oakland and was loaded with a highly flammable liquid. Had this exploded it could have been devastating to the Oakland area. I feel keeping this type of traffic out of the Oakland area is essential."

- **With the medical marijuana industry in Maryland gearing up, how do you view the industries future in Garrett County?**

- **Judy Carbone:** "In the US, 30 states and District of Columbia have medical cannabis laws and availability. There are 47,000 registered clients in Maryland who are allowed to receive prescriptions, one thousand registered medical providers, and 102 dispensary licenses of which 62 are up and running. The potential for reducing pain for many people is huge, and as a result, the potential for reducing Opioid addiction and the number of Opioid overdoses and deaths is also huge. Communities in Maryland have the potential with this industry, which is regulated by the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission, for economic development, tax revenue, and job creation. It was a shame that we in Garrett County lost these benefits for our community when Grow West chose to leave Garrett County for Allegany County. Specifically, we lost 40 immediate jobs (with a potential for 100 jobs in the future) that paid \$20/hour plus benefits. The reasons we lost these jobs and the other benefits from having Grow West in our community depend on who you talk to, and I know they were complicated. In part, however, we lost these jobs due to misinformation on how the Grow West facility would operate and integrate with our community -- some of which was propagated by our elected officials -- and a conservative mindset against medical cannabis. If our local officials do not work to educate the community on the true pros and cons of the industry coming to Garrett County and help people be more informed, I don't see the industry's future here being very bright. And as a result, it is our citizens who need pain medication and those who need living wage and benefit jobs who will lose out. The only way the industry will have a possible and bright future in Garrett County is if elected officials proactively recruit Medical Cannabis industry representatives and businesses, cultivate opportunities to have licenses here, and engage our citizens to help them understand the truths and the benefits of the industry. It would be unfortunate to be behind the curve in benefitting from this industry here in Garrett County while the rest of the State and country profits."

- **Larry Tichnell:** “I do not see any growers, producers or retailers coming to our area in the near future.”

- **What conflict do you see (if any) in our county governing body and how would you fix it?**

- **Judy Carbone:** “This is an interesting question, and if I were asked this in person, I would want to ask for clarification. But without it, I will take my best stab at it. I think part of the problem is that we don’t see any conflict...at least publicly, in terms of how our Commissioners discuss issues and then vote on them. At the beginning of their term, the Commissioners announced that they would always publicly vote unanimously on an issue before the Board, and they seem to have kept to that practice as most, if not all, of their votes are 3-0 or 0-3. This means that in public meetings, we, the citizens, are not privy to the Commissioner’s deliberations on an issue, which must be done in administrative session before the meeting or in the normal course of their day, keeping any discourse out of the view of the public and out of public meeting minutes. It also means that if they have a split vote on an issue, the third party would public say he agree to the decision even if he has a differing opinion. This is counter to democracy since it silences any conflicting views in our highest local office. And if only two commissioners are actually calling all the shots, we need a third for checks and balances.

That’s what bringing ALL PARTIES to the table can add to this Board of Commissioners...a vote that brings a clear check and balance to the Board and a voice that may have differing opinions that should be shared with the public to inform them of the complexities of decisions faced by the Commissioners. Respectful conflict and civil discourse is not bad, but a lack of such conflict and discourse in the public eye is, as it keeps the public from understanding the complexity of an issue, the varied options considered, and how their individual representatives weighed in on the matter.

- **Larry Tichnell:** “At the present time I know of no real conflicts in our government. I feel that our county administrator does an excellent job communicating with our department heads and working out any problems that may occur. He keeps us well informed.”

- **What do you consider the most important source of feedback for our citizens in order to make decisions based on us and our county’s needs?**

- **Judy Carbone:** “Unfortunately, we don’t have one most important source of feedback and information available to our citizens. We don’t have local TV, a local daily newspaper, and regular information sharing sources from our elected officials. We need to do more, and we need to do better. Our County Commissioners should be one source that we can always turn to, but by their own admission (5/09/2018, Economic Development Forum), they haven’t been very effective in keeping us informed. Public meetings are more about performing perfunctory duties than they are about keeping the public informed. The County Commissioners do not have an interactive social media or website source of information for citizens and to get feedback from citizens. I think they can do better about keeping us informed and getting

feedback from citizens in the process. If I am elected as County Commissioner, I will make it a personal priority to advocate for Commissioner meetings that include an update on what priorities are being worked on and what the timeline is for each activity; greater use of social media and an interactive website for the Commissioners; open office hours where Commissioners are available for citizens to stop by with questions or concerns; more public information sessions on issues that affect the community and that need to involve informed and engaged citizens; citizen advisory groups that convene on specific issues and include a variety of citizen representatives; partnerships with community organizations that are already exploring issues and possible solutions; and other mutually beneficial feedback methods.”

- **Larry Tichnell:** “We have taken our commissioners meetings to various communities in order to give our citizens a better chance to meet with us and let us know their concerns. I have kept an open policy for the citizens of Garrett County to meet with me if they have a problem.”

- **Where do you get your feedback and information you use for decision making?**

- **Judy Carbone:** “I suppose it depends on the kind and scope of the decision that needs to be made. Generally, however, I value teamwork and engaging others when making a decision that affects more than just me. First and foremost is to create a culture of inclusion and openness to ideas and possibilities, which would also be a personal priority for me if I were to be elected. There is no one source of information and feedback that I use but rather multiple sources whenever possible. There are those who are in positions of power and who have knowledge that should be consulted, but limiting the gathering of feedback and information from only the so called experts doesn’t allow for new solutions that may be out of the box. Asking “what do you think?” from others, especially from those who are most impacted and affected by the matter at hand, for me is an essential part of laying the foundation before reaching a decision. In addition, reading articles and books on the subject, looking at other communities who have dealt with the situation at hand, reviewing research, and just picking up the phone and talking to people I know who may have other sources of information may all come into play. As a career counselor, life coach and academic advisor in the past, I’ve worked with many individuals who were in the midst of making decisions. And as a manager of a department or director of an organization, there have been many decision-making processes, some of them for large scale issues, with which I have been involved. No matter the scope of the decision, it comes down to using as many sources as are available to generate options, then assessing the options to make a final selection, which then requires implementation and evaluation. Every decision-making process in which a leader is integrally involved offers new learning and new possibilities for decisions in the future.”
- **Larry Tichnell:** “I continue to go to all the various board meetings that I am on. I attend the chamber events. I listen to our department heads. I talk with my fellow commissioners and hear what they have to say about the meetings that they attend. “

School Board (Non-Partisan)

1. **Incumbents: what are three specific ideas or actions you have to save our school system money during your current term in office?**

2. **Challengers: What three ideas would you pursue to save our school system money?**
 - **Rodney Glotfelty, District 2:** “While this is the responsibility of the Superintendent and her staff, I would work with them to pursue strategies that are effective in saving money. When I oversaw the budget at the Health Department these strategies often resulted in budget surpluses. Simple measures include: Tightening procurement procedures to justify large expenditures. Delaying purchases that do not directly impact on student instruction and safety until it is clear the money is available. More importantly, we need to have a mindset among managers that spending every dollar which has been proposed in the budget is necessary. Unfortunately, not spending all state and federal dollars in a budget can often result in reductions the following year, however, that is not necessarily true of local dollars depending on funding levels. Finally, our school system needs to continue pursuing grants opportunities. When possible, existing personnel and resources can then be allocated in meeting conditions of the grant, thus resulting in overall budget savings.”
 - **Fred Gregg, District 3:**
 1. “I would reduce the money spent on substitute teachers by being more selective in how often we pull a teacher out of the classroom for professional leave. I would also provide a financial incentive for teachers and staff to not use their paid leave. The private sector uses this method and it has saved businesses money and increased productivity.”
 2. “I believe the practice of paying for out-of-county transfer students should be re-examined. Over time, this practice has cost our county millions of dollars in transportation expenses and lost state reimbursement. Today, out-of- county transfers costs amount to about \$40,000 annually, but that would be enough to hire one new teacher.”
 3. “I would pursue the possibility of a self-funded health insurance plan with our local health care providers, such as Garrett Regional Medical Center. This arrangement could provide significant savings and improve coverage benefits. Additionally, money spent locally is recycled back to organizations that depend on tax revenue, such as our school system. “

3. **Incumbents: what are three specific ideas or actions you have to save our school system money during your current term in office?**

4. **MABE and the Kirwan Commission. What are your thoughts on Garrett County school board participating at the state level and are you committed to personally being involved?**

- **Rodney Glotfelty, District 2:** “I believe if you are not at the table, you are not in the conversation. During my career as Health Officer for Garrett County, I always participated in state organizations, including the Maryland Association of County Health Officials, the Maryland Rural Council, The Maryland Rural Health Association, and the Health Secretary’s monthly Roundtable, serving as Chair of several of these organizations. I believe my participation was instrumental in the development of fair funding formulas for numerous public health programs in rural jurisdictions. I am personally committed to attending and serving on statewide commissions or organization that impact on policy decisions or funding strategies that impact on our public school system.”
- **Fred Gregg District 3:** “While I agree that we must stay involved at the state level to a certain degree, I believe that the solutions to our challenges will come from Garrett County, not Baltimore or Annapolis. The Kirwan Commission is a good example of a state initiative that started with great expectations on school funding reform, but failed to produce any real change. We are well aware of our local issues, and I believe the solutions will be at least conceived, and probably achieved at the local level.”

5. The superintendent eliminated all but one of the school consolidation/gradeband options at the last board meeting. If we pursue the Pre K-6 /7-12 option:

1. How will this remedy our financial shortfalls in the short term and long term?

- **Rodney Glotfelty, District 2:** “This was perhaps the least disruptive of the strategies under consideration. The intent is to eliminate the need to spend millions of dollars in replacement or repair of older facilities by maximizing the utilization of newer, nearby facilities”
- **Fred Gregg District 3:** “In reality, closing schools amounts to balancing the budget on the backs of teachers and students. In the short term, money is saved by reducing the money needed to renovate and maintain school buildings. In the long term, money is saved by reducing the number of school employees. Money is saved, but at what cost to the educational process?”

2. Will we be having the same conversation next year, and the years to come?

- **Rodney Glotfelty, District 2:** “Fluctuation of birth rates and population over time will impact on student enrollment, whether in a positive or negative manner. While we may not have this conversation next year, it is improbable that we can avoid the conversation in the years to come.”
- **Fred Gregg District 3:** “I certainly welcome the recent announcement to retain all existing community schools. But, without a realistic spending plan, we will eventually be right back in that same situation. We need new board members to promote fresh ideas and a different approach to the challenges facing our school system. “