

Questionnaire for County Commissioner Candidates,
Republican Primary Election, March 5, 2024
(Voters may vote for 3)

Questions	Ryan Bowden	Leonard Harrison	Barry Joyce	John Paisley, Jr.	Ed Priola	Pamela Tyler Thompson
Budget/Taxes/Spending 1. In general, do you believe Alamance County government's property tax rate is too high, too low, or about right? 1a. At about what level do you think the county tax rate, now 43.2¢ per \$100 valuation, should be set? 2. Historically, Alamance County has been considered to have had a relatively low property tax rate, at least compared to more urban areas to the east and west. In recent years, there are some who have urged that maintaining a low tax rate should not be such a high priority, but rather that the county should increase its tax rate in order to fund additional government services and/or spend more in some existing areas. What is your overall philosophy on the proper balance between tax rate and spending for 2024 and beyond? [50 word limit]	1. About right. 1a. N/A 2. Alamance County continues to see growth and faces significant challenges, property tax rate is Ok for now but we need to make sure our commercial property rates are in line. If not this could generate additional revenue.	1. [Refused to respond.] 1a. [Refused to respond.] 2. [Refused to respond.]	1. Too high. 1a. No response. 2. Revenue Neutral is a meaningless term to the taxpayers. If the re-valuation is accurate then the tax rate will reflect fair taxing. Valuations must be computed by qualified personnel.	1. Too High. 1a. 42.59 cents per \$100 valuation. 2. The tax rate must be at a level to support the necessary needs of our citizens but the county should not be a supplier of every wish list item for all interests. Departments should be expected to live within their annual budget.	1. Too high. 1a. 42.2 cents per \$100 valuation. 2. My top priority for Alamance County is to cut property taxes so families can keep more of their hard-earned money. We need to fund essential government services (law enforcement, first responders, education) while cutting wasteful spending. Let's let families, not government bureaucrats, decide how to allocate their limited resources. 3. Yes.	1. About right. 1a. — 2. The tax rate should be kept as low as possible to adequately support governmental required services for our citizens, example: maintenance of schools, law enforcement, EMS services, DSS, parks & recreation, county facility upkeep, veterans and senior services.
3. The county's next tax revaluation is scheduled for 2027. Do you believe the county's tax rate after the revaluation should be "revenue neutral" compared the pre-revaluation level, to accommodate for the expected increase in property values? 3a. If yes, please respond: In the past, some candidates have expressed support for a "revenue neutral" tax rate, but, once elected, did not abide by that commitment when the situation actually arose. How can voters take you at your word that you will, in fact, insist on a "revenue neutral rate" after the next revaluation? [25 word limit]	3. Yes. 3a. I don't make promises that can sometimes become unreachable, however I will make every good faith efforts when that time comes.	3. [Refused to respond.] 3a. [Refused to respond.]	3. Yes. 3a. My commitment to the taxpayer is to get valuation completed by qualified personnel. This will in turn lead to a below revenue neutral tax rate.	3. Yes. 3a. I was the sole vote against increasing the tax rate to 43.2 cents per hundred.	3. Yes. 3a. I fought for lower taxes as Field Director of National Taxpayers Union, unlike Pamela Thompson who voted for 1 tax increase and against 2 cuts.	3. Yes. 3a. Yes, but NEVER set in stone due to an unplanned last minute crisis that can arise and therefore adjustments must be made.
4. Alamance County's commissioners have put a ¼-cent local option sales tax referendum on the ballot four previous times, each of which has been turned down by county voters. Supporters of the additional sales tax would help offset the impact of the property tax. Would you vote for or against putting the referendum on the ballot again? 5. In general, do you believe Alamance County government spending is too high, too low, or about right?	4. For. 5. About right. About right for now but we must find creative ways in the future to address the growing challenges that face this county.	4. [Refused to respond.] 5. [Refused to respond.]	4. For. 5. About right.	4. Against. 5. About right.	4. Against. 5. Too high.	4. For. But up to citizen to vote yes or no. 5. About right.
5a. Specifically, which areas do you believe are "too high"? and which are "too low"? (Limit of three per category)	5a. --	5a. [Refused to respond.]	5a. Too high: new construction. Too low: public safety schools.	5a. --	5a. Too high: General Government (administrative bloat). Too low: Public Safety (law enforcement and first responders).	5a. Too high: Specifically, possible multi-million dollar courthouse addition. Too low: Specifically, maintenance of school property (roof, HVAC and windows).
6. Prioritize your top three spending priorities among these (or other) possible issues for the next 2-4 years: a. Building new/additional court facilities b. Establishing a satellite EMS station in Mebane c. Converting a building already bought by the county for a 9-1-1 center d. Providing additional pay for county employees e Raising the local supplement for ABSS teachers f. Increasing funding for other aspects of ABSS g. _____ (Other - please specify) h. _____ (Other - please specify) 6a. Which, if any, of the above is of sufficient urgency or significance that you would be willing to raise property taxes in order to fund them?	6. Top priorities: 1. Public Safety Infrastructure 2. Aging Buildings/Infrastructure 3. -- 6a. Public Safety is ALWAYS of the utmost importance. There are other creative ways to generate revenue. We must think outside the box.	6. [Refused to respond.] 6a. [Refused to respond.]	6. 1. b. 2. a. 3. c. 6a. None.	6. 1. b. 2. g. Space for the new judge. 3. h. Space for the public defender. 6a. None. Should be able to provide under the current tax rate.	6. 1. Support the Sheriff's Office (Deputies, SROs, Jail). 2. Support first responders (emergency management, fire, EMS). 3. Institute zero-based budgeting. 6a. None; cut waste and grow the local economy, so same tax rate funds priorities...	6. 1. e. 2. d. 3. b. 6a. None.
County government policies 7. What role, if any, should the county have in public transportation? (25 word limit)	7. Make sure our elderly, shut-ins, disabled have access to transportation to and from doc apt, etc.	7. [Refused to respond.]	7. I believe ACTA is a worthwhile program. Want no part of Link Transit.	7. I support ACTA. ACTA provides services for citizens unable to obtain medical transport and other transportation for themselves.	7. Limited. As President Ronald Reagan said, "Government's first duty is to protect the people, not run their lives." ...nonprofit sector can provide such transportation services.	7. ACTA, I feel it is already more than sufficient to provide transportation for our citizens.
7a. Specifically, do you support continued county funding of Alamance County Transportation Authority (ACTA)? 7b. Specifically, should the county provide any additional funding to Burlington's LINK transit system to expand routes in other areas of the county? [25 word limit]	7a. Yes. 7b. No. Maybe look into some type of service utilizing UBER services.	7a. [Refused to respond.] 7b. [Refused to respond.]	7a. Yes. 7b. No. Continued funding for ACTA.	7a. Yes. 7b. No.	7a. No. 7b. No.	7a. Yes. 7b. No. There has been an enormous amount of money invested in LINK. I felt ACTA could have provided this service for the entire county.
8. Please outline the principles that would govern your decision on which companies should receive tax-financed incentives and under what circumstances. [50 word limit]	8. I would look at incentives on a case by case and see what benefits it brings to the citizens of Alamance County. BUC-EE's is prime example that you don't need incentives all the time to bring business into county.	8. [Refused to respond.]	8. I am not in favor of incentives. The companies that have located here mainly for cheap labor. That is enough incentive.	8. Incentives must be earned per the agreed terms with the county. To receive incentives, a company must sufficiently increase tax revenues and employment to a substantial level even during the incentive period.	8. We need policies that promote smart, balanced economic growth in Alamance County by attracting a variety of investments in industry, services, and family agriculture. Our policies should not be designed to pick winners and losers, serve special interests, or subsidize favored businesses. Transparency in all deliberations is key.	8. This is very complicated. We must be competitive in bringing new industry to Alamance County. I understand the need for this in building our tax base and creating jobs. However, each case must be decided as to the TRUE benefits for the county.
9. What should the county be doing to foster a strong business climate? [25 word limit]	9. Building strong and lasting relationships with our Business and Community Partners.	9. [Refused to respond.]	9. We seek out higher paying companies for our taxpayers and not just look at tax revenue. Competition will raise wages.	9. Provide a reasonable tax rate, use the current structure of ACC and an improved structure of ABSS to supply graduates with the needed life skills for today's workforce, and provide recreational/cultural opportunities to create a place where employees enjoy living.	9. We must create an opportunity economy by removing barriers to entrepreneurship and encouraging farms/businesses to create well-paid local jobs that offer meaningful work.	9. Successful schools, safe neighborhoods, excellent parks and recreation, consistent tax rates and low crime.
10. Do you support or oppose countywide zoning? [25 word limit] 10a. Why or why not? [25 word limit]	10. Oppose. 10a. We should have ordinances in place to address these needs but must be willing to also allow the citizens of Alamance County to ultimately decide.	10. [Refused to respond.] 10a. [Refused to respond.]	10. Support. 10a. Example: farmer owns large crop-producing farm. Neighbor sells smaller farm next door to tract builder, whose residents then claim farmer is hurting them with chemicals.	10. Oppose. 10a. -- 11. Minor.	10. Oppose. 10a. The county already has some 62 ordinances that include rules similar to zoning rules. We need less bureaucracy, not more.	10. Support. 10a. Enormous changes are happening in Alamance County. I want the citizens of our county to have a stronger voice in what builds here.

(CONTINUED)

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11. How much of a problem are gun ranges or other target shooting in rural areas of the county.	11. Minor. Safety should be of the utmost importance.	11. [Refused to respond.]	11. Major and minor. Depends on if you live next to one.	11. Minor.	11. Minor.	11. Minor.
11a. What, if any, additional noise or other county regulation would you favor? [25 word limit]	11a. N/A	11a. [Refused to respond.]	11a. None.	11a. At this time, I foresee no need for additional noise ordinances.	11a. None. The Board of Commissioners shouldn't invent new burdensome rules and regulations on legal businesses.	11a. none, simply comply with current ordinances.
12. There has been discussion from some residents who have suggested that the Confederate monument in front of the historic courthouse should be moved. Would you support or oppose moving the monument? If so, where? [25 word limit]	12. Oppose.	12. [Refused to respond.]	12. Oppose. This monument reminds us of a dark time in our history. It should serve as a reminder that no human being should be owned by another.	12. Oppose. Our history is important.	12. Whether or not the monument should be moved is a decision best left to the voters or the courts (not a mob or elected official).	12. Oppose.
13. Which, if any, of the following federal holidays should be added as an additional holiday(s) for county employees? [25 word limit] a. George Washington's Birthday/Presidents' Day b. Juneteenth c. Columbus Day	13. I could get behind adding Presidents' Day. Also I've always said September 11 th should be considered as a holiday and or Election Day.	13. [Refused to respond.]	13. a. George Washington's Birthday/Presidents' Day. It is already taken off by financial institutions, etc.	13. No additional holidays.	13. None. Public employees should not be afforded special benefits (e.g., additional holidays) compared to the private-sector taxpayers they serve.	13. None.
14. Some North Carolina counties have adopted ordinances that seek to ban discrimination within their jurisdictions based on sexual orientation (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people) in public accommodations and employment. Does Alamance County need such an ordinance?	14. No.	14. [Refused to respond.]	14. No.	14. No.	14. No. A patchwork of such local ordinances is unwarranted.	14. No.
14a. Would you vote for or against such an ordinance?	14a. Against.	14a. [Refused to respond.]	14a. Against.	14a. Against.	14a. Against.	14a. Against.
15. Do you support or oppose the contracts that the county has previously entered into with ICE (the Immigration and Customs Enforcements) and the U.S. Marshals Service to rent Alamance County jail space to house their prisoners during transport to federal facilities?	15. Support.	15. [Refused to respond.]	15. Support.	15. Support.	15. Support.	15. Support.
15a. Would you be inclined to support or oppose a renewal for: a. ICE b. Marshals Service	15a. a. Support. b. Support	15a. a. [Refused to respond.] b. [Refused to respond.]	15a. a. Support. b. Support.	15a. a. Support. b. Support.	15a. a. Support. b. Support.	15a. a. Support. b. Support.
16. In general, do you believe that the county is providing too much, too little, or about the right amount of funding for the Alamance County sheriff's office? [25 word limit]	16. About right.	16. [Refused to respond.]	16. About right.	16. About right – Salaries should be competitive.	16. Too little.	16. About right. The problem we are facing is with SHORTAGES in some areas of staffing which are dangerous. We have given raises, but still the shortages remain.
16a. If too little, would you be willing to raise property taxes to provide increased funding?	16a. Only if needed. Again there are other ways to generate additional revenue.	16a.[Refused to respond.]	16a. No.	16a. No.	16a. No. We can increase funding to the Sheriff's Office by cutting wasteful spending (e.g., administrative bloat).	16a. —
17. The sheriff has reported a rather persistent shortage of jailers in the Alamance County Detention Center. What can the county do to improve recruitment and retention of jail employees? [25 word limit]	17. Folks come here, receive their training, and leave a couple years later for better pay. How much taxpayer money are we wasting by training these folks?	17. [Refused to respond.]	17. This is a problem nationwide. I think the solution if there is one is check other counties that have been successful at retaining officers.	17. In our last meeting, commissioners completed a salary study and increased detention salaries to be competitive with other areas.	17. Unfreeze hiring on those positions; offer hazard pay that makes them appealing to both new and existing employees.	17. This is an extremely difficult job. The environment must be SAFE and wages must be competitive. These issues are statewide and affecting our military also.
Education	17. About right.	17. [Refused to respond.]	17. About right.	17. About right.	17. About right.	17. About right.
17. Does the county budget provide too much, not enough, or about the right level of funding for the Alamance-Burlington School System?						
17a. If too little, would you be willing to raise property taxes to provide increased funding?	17a. Again there are other ways to generate additional revenue sources.	17a. [Refused to respond.]	17a. No.	17a. No.	17a. No.	17a. —
18. In your view, who is responsible for what some critics describe as the poor condition of the county school system's physical facilities? [choices given: Commissioners, School Board, School Administration, Other (Please specify)]	18. County commissioners, School Board, and School Administration. I believe there is room for improvements from all parties.	18. [Refused to respond.]	18. Other – A bad relationship and turnover at ABSS.	18. School Board.	18. School Board and School Administration.	18. County commissioners, School Board, School administration. There is enough blame to go around and it HAS TO STOP!
19. What specific initiatives or policies would you propose or support to improve the quality of public education in Alamance County? [50 word limit]	19. We need discussion about consolidating or working closer together with the maintenance needs of our facilitates. Some type of long range plans. School system should focus more on education of our children. Majority of my time on school board seems to be more about maintenance rather than educational needs.	19. [Refused to respond.]	19. Parent involvement in the child's education is key to improving the education process. Teachers are there to educate your child not to raise them. The State should have never closed our mental health facilities and reform schools.	19. Commissioners have adequately provided for school facilities but ABSS has chosen not to spend the provided funds and/or diverted the provided funds to other purposes such as bonuses. Two high schools were provided \$5,000,000 each by 2022 for roof replacements but ABSS didn't enter contracts to make the repairs.	19. Hold town hall meetings where parents/educators can bring concerns directly to the Board of Commissioners. Request detailed monthly updates from the ABSS administration on all capital projects (funding/completion status, issues). Institute zero based budgeting, requiring all ABSS expenses funded from county funds to be justified in each budget period.	19. Leaders in the community MUST work together. ABSS has great teachers and great kids. A school is only as strong as its parent's involvement, that is life changing. Policies are on paper. The real makings of a successful school shows up for children.
20. Alamance County voters approved a \$150 million bond package for ABSS in November 2018 to be used for renovations and construction to increase capacity at the high school level. Do you anticipate the need for another bond referendum for repairs and/or expansions at other grade levels during the next four years?	20. Yes.	20. [Refused to respond.]	20. No.	20. No.	20. No.	20. No.
20a. If yes, please identify where you see the greatest facility needs and why. [50 word limit]	20a. We will soon see substantial growth in the deep parts of the south with the development of mega sites in Randolph County. Mebane is also a growing area of concern. The time will come that we must find creative ways to keep up with the growth.	20a. [Refused to respond.]	20a. —	20a. --	20a. —	20a. —
21. In general do you support or oppose the concept of allowing additional charter schools to be developed and started in Alamance County? [25 word limit]	21. Support. Parents have a right to choose the type of education their children receive.	21. [Refused to respond.]	21. Support. I support school choice.	21. Support.	21. Support. Taxpayer dollars should follow students to the educational institutions of their parents' choice (whether that's a public, charter, private, faith-based, or home school).	21. Support. Public schools...by law accept all children. Charter schools are public schools, but children must apply, be accepted. Both systems should provide educational needs of children.
General Comments						
22. What is your greatest area of disagreement with action(s) taken by the county commissioners in the past 2-5 years? [25 word limit]	22. I don't necessarily have any disagreements, however I believe we can do a better job of thinking ahead into the future of Alamance County.	22. [Refused to respond.]	22. Their expensive attempt to model our county after counties with higher wages and tax base.	22. The tax rate increase above revenue-neutral and providing bonuses to the social services department. Bonuses don't increase the retention of employees. Instead, salaries should be competitive.	22. Following the revaluation, four commissioners increased the property tax rate above revenue neutral. Only John Paisley voted against the increase. I would have joined him.	22. Veterans Services Office, tax revaluation, the ACC training center excessive costs, Friendship Day Center funding, Constant fighting between Commissioners and Board of Education.