

Congratulations on your quest to be Lake County's next Sheriff From: Kay Barron [kay@cfpba.org]
Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2008 10:24 AM
To: info@mysingerforsheriff.com
Subject: FW: Lake County Sheriff Candidate Questions.doc

Congratulations on your quest to be Lake County's next Sheriff!

As a candidate seeking the PBA endorsement, please take the time to read and answer each of these screening questions as thoroughly as possible.

All Sheriff candidate screening questions and the responses will be posted on the Central Florida PBA web site for membership & public viewing. Candidate responses to the screening questions must be returned in an electronic format to the Central Florida PBA by 5:00 PM on January 4, 2007. All responses shall be sent to our local PBA office at the email address of kay@cfpba.org.

Failure to respond by the noted deadline may disqualify you for any PBA endorsement.

Lake County Sheriff candidate screening questions are listed below and must be explained in detailed responses.

Combating Violent Crime

- 1) What is your specific plan to combat violent crime in Lake County?

Violent Crime is often related to or an outcome of other forms of crime such as the drug deal that becomes a robbery, that results in a homicide. As Sheriff of Lake County I will institute a Crime Analysis program to track and map crime trends so that resources can be deployed to the appropriate areas at the appropriate time. This must include flexibility in utilizing resources. A tactical response team to combat violent crime must be able to respond where and when necessary. We often find that those arrested for violent crime are wanted for other crimes committed. As Sheriff I will enhance efforts to aggressively arrest those wanted on outstanding warrants through the selection of the quantity and quality of human resources necessary to effectively implement an aggressive arrest program. Technology can assist in combating violent crime by soliciting assistance from the public. Web based electronic reporting of tips and leads on possible perpetrators of crime and the posting of information on wanted subjects are two examples. I will also work closely with the State Attorney and the Chief Judge to ensure violent felons are being held accountable through higher bonds, prosecuted to the full capacity of the law and enhanced sentencing upon conviction. I will work through multi discipline criminal justice committees to ensure all partners are working toward this common goal.

- 2) Would you "mandate" sworn agency personnel to work overtime in order to combat violent crime?

I would not be in favor of mandated overtime. Except for crises situations, which may include a spike in violent crime, and as long as objectives are specific, within time certain, (short in duration, meaning a week or two), I would not mandate overtime. Mandated overtime is an indication that resources are not sufficient. Deputies work long hours and need down time for family, recreation and recuperation. Human resources should be sufficient enough to handle most situations with few exceptions and if overtime is needed it should be voluntary. As Sheriff I will work with the county to ensure the commissioners have a full understanding of the need for human resources and the approval of a budget necessary to obtain those resources. I will ensure our Human Resources Department effectively and efficiently processes candidates and provides a pool of applicants ready to be hired and deployed so that manpower levels are maintained at full capacity. This may include being in a continuous over higher capacity at the deputy level by reduced staffing levels at higher ranks and an aggressive recruitment program to attract certified experienced Florida law enforcement officers who can be deployed and active on the street in a short period of time.

Pay and Benefits

1) How will you facilitate and secure LCSO pay plans to a more competitive level?

The current pay plan certainly needs modification. For example, corporals are required to pass the sergeant selection process. We often expect them to assume the duties and responsibilities of the sergeant yet they are not compensated by being at a higher pay level than deputies. As Sheriff I will examine the pay scales for Law Enforcement around the state on an on going basis and work with the county commissioners on an appropriate budget. I will seek a contractual long term, five year plan for increasing the number of deputies based on a national standard for per capita allocation and that builds in an annual cost of living and/or merit pay increase. By being contractual I mean the funds allocated for this are locked in for that purpose and cannot be diverted to pay for other benefits nor can the county decide to opt out of the agreement. I will also not allow base pay to be increased without a fair and comparable increase in pay for all non exempt employees. Raising the base pay without doing so may result in less tenured employees making more money than senior personnel when their annual percentage increase in pay is based on a higher base pay. Budget approval is often secured through a level of trust built on a record of sound fiscal responsibility administered with integrity and I have the trust of employees as well as government officials.

2) Have you reviewed the LCSO budget and pay plans? What is your opinion on the line item budgeting in various areas?

I recently retired after 25 years with the Lake County Sheriff's Office and I am very familiar with the budget and pay plan. The budgeting format is adequate but can be improved upon. The budget should be user friendly and that means understandable by the average deputy. I believe in transparency. Line items/lack of should not be so complex as to hide funding and not provide a clear picture of what funds are available for what purposes and what funds are being expended for. The pay plan is inadequate and needs serious modification. The pay plan should be fair and equitable compensation for the rank and tenure of the employee. Overlapping of steps between differing ranks may result in subordinate

level pay being higher than that of a higher rank. This can create morale problems. I conducted a staff study on budgeting a number of years ago for the Lake County Sheriff's Office and will do so again as Sheriff to ensure fair and equitable compensation for all employees compared to similar central Florida agencies.

3) Does your LCSO pay plan equate years of service with the step plan?

Yes, it does.

4) Describe how you would secure the most economic resources available from Lake County government leaders.

As stated above I believe budget approval is often secured through a level of trust built on a record of sound fiscal responsibility administered with integrity. Often, difficulties with getting budget approval are based on the need for more information and an understanding of industry standards. By industry standards I mean looking at other county and municipal law enforcement agencies and intra county agencies as if they were competitors. For example; we must have a competitive base pay to compete for law enforcement candidates. If we do not we will find it difficult to maintain our allocated human resources at full capacity. If the per capita resources to fight crime in a neighboring county are greater than in Lake County those counties may be able to provide enhanced crime fighting resources that results in displacing crime into Lake County. In simple terms if I stand a greater chance of being captured committing a crime in one county I may choose to go to the other county. Lake County does not want to be the "other" county. I realize of course perpetrators do not pay attention to per capita resources or to jurisdictional borders but they do have a fluid trend of moving to areas where the probability of being captured is reduced. I will keep the commissioners informed by educating them on crime trends in Lake County relative to other jurisdictions and the per capita resources being used by other jurisdictions in order to secure the economic resources necessary to maintain a professional agency equipped with the resources to improve the quality of life in Lake County. Commissioners will be informed through meetings, news letters and invitations to meetings where these relative issues are discussed. Continually educating them and seeking input from them can make the budget approval process to secure the needed economic resources mutually beneficial. In current times of reduced taxes budget negotiations are critical but I will also be prepared to address any short falls through an aggressive grant seeking program. I will employ the necessary expertise to seek federal grant funding to assist in ensuring we have the resources necessary without burdening the tax payers.

Agency Vehicles and Equipment

1) What plan do you have to outfit LCSO deputies with the best weaponry, vehicles and equipment needed to effectively combat violent crime while better protecting themselves and the community?

Implement Computer Aided Dispatching with location based historical crime data so personnel know what type of crime area or crime location they are responding to and the criminal the suspect(s) they are likely to encounter. I would like to have GPS equipment in first responders' vehicles to enhance response time and

facilitate setting up perimeters to increase probabilities of capturing perpetrators. I will work with the county for long term, five year plan, on maintaining a fleet of patrol vehicles (not administrator's vehicles which may have a longer life) that do not surpass five years or 100,000 miles. Selection of vehicles should be based on the job function not on rank. Work with the county to secure radios that keep up with the digital technology in order to enhance communication and maintain officer safety. We should not have trouble, dead spots. I would like each squad to have night vision to assist in surveillance so that a patrol deputy can watch a known drug location undetected. I will ensure those directly responsible for combating violent crime have the best of our resources and not the administrators. The citizens of Lake County deserve a professional organization properly equipped to protect and maintain the quality of life Lake County is noted for.

Staffing Levels

1) Have you reviewed the current LCSO staffing levels? Would you change the current Civilian & Sworn staffing levels at the OCSO?

I spent the last 25 years working for the Lake County Sheriff's Office on the Law Enforcement side, and I am a certified law enforcement officer. I am familiar with the staffing levels. We need more deputies, less administrators than is currently in effect. We need to improve the ratio of sworn to civilian employees.

2) Many law enforcement agencies are experiencing significant "recruiting and retention problems." How would you "attract and retain" the best sworn personnel?

I will seek to raise the base pay to be competitive with other agencies, with an appropriate adjustment for all personnel, and increase benefits already in place. For example, the tuition reimbursement program needs to be enhanced. As you may know, years ago law enforcement officers were compensated by the state for certain training. Most of this has been eliminated. I will examine the ability for comparable compensation to be provided by the county.

3) What is your plan and timeline to increase the amount of sworn personnel, specifically those who answer calls for service?

As you know until new budget negotiations take place I will have a limited ability to address this issue. However, the Sheriff's Office is top heavy and within the first quarter I will reduce management positions and increase the number of first responders. I will look at the allocation of specialty units to ensure they are operating efficiently and any excess personnel will be placed back in patrol.

4) What is your position regarding Charter Government with respect to the Lake County Sheriff's Office? Additionally, do you agree with consolidated Law Enforcement services? Why or why not?

I believe the Sheriff answers to the people s/he serves and not to the agenda of other political entities. Voters need to have a voice. It is a fundamental right of citizens of this country. Government should not look at ways to take away or reduce the impact of the people's voice. I would oppose Charter Government with respect to the Lake County Sheriff's Office. Consolidated Law Enforcement is

situational based. But, in Lake County I believe in the autonomy of municipalities to determine the method of delivering law enforcement services. Contracting services may be more appropriate than consolidation and a more realistic goal to achieve. I have an excellent working relationship with the municipal chiefs. If one of the municipal chiefs initiated discussions regarding contractual services with me, I would work cohesively with them to reach a mutually agreed upon contract. Only then would I agree to have the Sheriff's Office provide services. But let me be clear, I believe in the autonomy of the chiefs of police and working together for the benefit of all Lake County citizens.

Complaint Process and Disciplinary Appeal Process

- 1) Would you agree that "Just Cause" should be deemed the burden of proof regarding internal investigation cases?

Law enforcement must maintain a high standard of conduct and conduct not meeting that standard needs to be dealt with. Too high a burden of proof may allow inappropriate behavior to go unabated. However, we need to treat the high quality of individuals we hire with more respect than offered to criminals by the criminal justice system, not less. I want to work on a plan that not only meets the legal requirements for closing an internal investigation in a time certain but one that treats our personnel with the high level of respect they deserve. We need to maintain an agency of professional law enforcement officers by dealing with inappropriate behavior. I would not be opposed to examining "just cause" as the burden of proof. We may want to work together to develop a plan that uses "just cause" for cases that may result in suspension or termination and "preponderance of evidence" for cases where the consequences are less severe. This can facilitate minor cases being disposed of more efficiently without a standard of proof so high that discipline is too difficult to achieve given the time certain legal requirements. It may also ensure personnel facing career or life altering consequences are treated with the dignity, fairness and the respect they deserve. Also, by increasing the burden of proof on the more serious offenses an earlier determination may be achieved as to the probability of reaching that burden, or not, resulting in a more efficient resolution by closing cases earlier that have a low probability of meeting the standard of proof. To maintain a professional organization discipline is sometimes necessary and the citizens of Lake County deserve a professional organization.

- 2) Do you agree that your current discipline and appeals process is fundamentally fair to the accused? Why or why not?

I believe it is fundamentally fair but improvements need to be made to ensure that similar grievances result in similar consequences so that we maintain consistency and fairness. The structure of the board may need to be modified as well. I would propose a committee, adequately represented by all concerned, to examine the process to offer improvements that would be mutually beneficial. First line employees must be fully represented in all policy making. I believe each employee should have complete confidence that the process developed was done with fair and adequate representation of their interest.

3) Would you agree to a grievance process in the disciplinary appeal process that includes "outside binding arbitration?"

No, I believe in the professionalism of our organization and if we are not capable of utilizing an internal process for disciplinary issues than the organization has failed itself.

Association Activities

1) As Sheriff, will you agree to authorize the PBA to have access to your agency mail boxes?

Yes, with the understanding that unless the PBA is the bargaining unit all equivalent associations should have equal access.

2) As Sheriff, will you agree to authorize the PBA to use the agency inter-office mail system?

Conditionally, as long as equality of use and purpose is maintained. Unless PBA is the bargaining unit other similar organizations should have equal access. Also, I will not spend the tax payers money for a robust, expensive system to handle personal email or business unrelated to the operational needs of the agency.

3) Would you utilize the PBA as an ally for legislative or local issues?

Yes, this is mutually beneficial. This is especially true on the local level. People want to know how those closest to the situation, the first responders, feel about the issues and not as much about what politicians think. PBA represents the first responders and can speak for them. We need a team effort and the PBA can be beneficial if members and non members work toward a common goal.

4) How would you secure a better working relationship with the PBA?

I would like to have regular meetings throughout the year with the PBA representatives even if there is no formalized union. I will consider having a PBA representative attend staff level meetings to provide input.

5) Do you support collective bargaining? Do you have experience working with a bargaining unit?

I do not have experience working with a bargaining unit. Therefore I do not support nor do I oppose having a bargaining unit. I do believe in allowing personnel to make that decision without interference.

6) Do you have relationships or loyalty to any other unions and/or law enforcement associations that would conflict with a good working relationship with the PBA? How would you handle internal conflicts between rival associations in your agency?

No, I do not have any loyalty or association with any other union or law enforcement association. Conflict between rival associations can be minimized by

mutual respect between the organizations which I would work to achieve through joint meetings with representatives of those associations and maintaining a neutral position.

Health and Retirement Benefits

1) Would you agree to increase the LCSO's subsidy contribution amount to a level where the employee can retire after 20 years of service and have their individual health care paid for?

No, at this time. This is an expensive proposition. As you know, health care is a very expensive benefit and increasing drastically each year. Any candidate who would make such a commitment may be fiscally irresponsible and would be making a commitment that cannot be kept.

2) Would you agree to continue or increase the LCSO's health care contribution amount?

Yes, I would agree to continue the health care plan and examine the feasibility of increasing benefits.

Testing & Promotions

1) Would you agree to a permanent list for those candidates who qualify for supervisor and/or manager status?

No, I believe in annual testing if it can be done in an efficient and cost effective manner. Trying to have testing that is absolutely equal over multiple years is difficult. This makes it difficult to infuse the newly qualified candidates in an appropriate ranked order with those on the existing, permanent, list.

2) Would you agree to have the promotional process conducted by an outside testing assessment center?

Yes, I believe the testing process should be contracted out and should be conducted without any interference or influence by the agency or agency personnel.

3) What type of rank order system would you apply to select a supervisor from the promotional list?

I believe in openly publishing a list ranked in order based on test scores. I would promote in that order without deviation taking any and all politics out of the decision making.

4) Would you consider streamlining supervisory and managerial classifications to redistribute the surplus monies into the base salaries of line deputies and supervisors?

Yes, I would consider streamlining these classifications as the span of control is too small and the agency is somewhat top heavy. Money needs to be diverted to either base salaries or to additional line personnel.

Experience

1) What professional and life experiences do you have that qualifies you as an Lake County Sheriff candidate?

Four generations of my family reside in Lake County. I know Lake County and the issues and concerns of the citizens. I am a military veteran. I am an experienced law enforcement officer having risen through the ranks of the Lake County Sheriff's Office on the law enforcement side and recently retiring as a captain. I know the Lake County Sheriff's Office and the issues and concerns it faces. I have a diverse background of law enforcement experience and training. I have a Bachelors Degree and I am a graduate of the prestigious Southern Police Institutes' Administrative Officers Course. I have long term affiliations with many Lake County civic organizations and did not just join such organizations when I decided to run for Sheriff.

2) How many total volunteers do you have and how many actually participate? How is your volunteer system coordinated?

I have a core group of about 50 with total numbers being around 200. The volunteers are coordinated through a team effort of six individuals.

3) What endorsements do you currently have? What endorsements are you actively seeking?

I do not have any formal endorsement but I have sought the endorsement of the FOP and the NAACP.

4) What is the current financial status of your campaign (ie. contributions, spending, etc)?

The campaign is fiscally sound with contributions close to 25,000. Approximately half of these funds have been allocated to expenses.