



VOTER REPORT

Candidates Respond to Important Questions Impacting Local Businesses

March 19, 2024: Primary Election
Prosecuting Attorney

The Findlay•Hancock County Chamber of Commerce Advisory Board invited the candidates running for local offices to respond to a questionnaire in order for you, the business community, to vote pro-business. Learn why the candidates chose to run and their top priorities should they be elected. These candidates were asked to respond, up to 175 words, to each question below. Those responses are listed exactly as they were received, and those that exceeded the required word count are stopped at 175 words.

Q. What were the primary motivations and driving factors that led you to decide to run for public office?



Sean M. Abbott: Our system of government is predicated on the strong leadership and guidance of educated and competent elected officials. County prosecutor, as the top legal advisor and chief law enforcement officer for Hancock County, demands unique qualifications and experience, leadership skills, and a deep commitment to our community. I have been an active attorney for over ten years, having practiced in over twenty counties across Ohio. I have served as an assistant prosecuting attorney for five years of my legal career, developing a full understanding of each aspect of the duties and responsibilities of the county prosecutor. I possess the necessary legal skills, qualifications, and experience. I have the desire and energy to serve and will utilize my skills and experience to bring positive leadership to our county prosecutor's office. I care deeply about our community and believe I will help keep Hancock County safe, prosperous, and thriving!



Heather Pendleton: Serving the community I grew up, live, and work in is my primary motivation to run for Prosecutor. I graduated Summa Cum Laude from University of Findlay in 2003. Afterwards, I attended Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law and graduated in 2006. In that 18 years, I've maintained my small private law office. In 2017, I was hired as Assistant Prosecutor by Prosecutor Phillip Riegler. When Prosecutor Riegler announced he was running for Common Pleas Court Judge, I knew immediately I was running for Prosecutor. Even now, as Assistant Prosecutor, I answer the phone calls from law enforcement 24/7, evenings, weekends, and holidays. I accompany METRICH, our drug task force, on raids to stop drug dealers in our community. I've met Findlay detectives downtown at 3am to assist with search warrants for a murder scene. I've won Trials on important cases and fought for helpless victims, and I'm just getting started. I'm ready now to serve as your next Prosecutor.

Q. What are your priorities or concerns for your community?



Sean M. Abbott: Hancock County has always been a wonderful community to raise a family. I hope to keep it that way for many years. My wife and I are from Hancock County and have chosen to raise our daughters here. This creates a personal and civic duty to protect and keep our community safe. In the fight to keep our community safe, we must target the opiate and methamphetamine addiction crisis. That begins with taking a tough, hardline, and no-nonsense approach to the prosecution of drug dealers and the peddlers of opiates and methamphetamine that fuel this crisis in our community. We will ensure that those with addiction and mental health issues will be guided to the support services they need. We will fight to provide a voice for the victims of violent crimes and ensure that the violent criminals who are their abusers will be zealously prosecuted. We will achieve these lofty goals by building strong relationships with law enforcement, community stakeholders, and partner agencies, working together as a community.



criminals accountable.

Heather Pendleton: My top priority is community safety. With I-75 running through the western half of Hancock County, illegal drugs are and will continue to be an ongoing problem for our community. As Assistant Prosecutor, I receive calls from law enforcement regarding potential charges and the evidence necessary to prosecute drug crimes, among others. The working relationships I've built with law enforcement are paramount to successful prosecution. In the last 6 months, I've secured 3 separate convictions of Involuntary Manslaughter, felonies of the first degree, against drug dealers who sold illegal drugs which killed people. Additionally, many of the felony-level drug offenses take place within 1,000 feet of a school, jeopardizing the safety and welfare of our children. However, I have the experience necessary to continue prosecuting these dangerous felons and a record of holding these

Q. What steps will you take to actively listen to the concerns and perspectives of all community members, including those with differing opinions?



Sean M. Abbott: We must always seek first to understand before trying to be understood. While I have extensive experience and a thorough understanding of the law, I am always willing to engage with community members with differing opinions with an open heart and mind. We have each walked a different path and faced different life experiences, but we share the same community. To be an effective public servant, one must always be willing to listen to all perspectives. I will welcome and encourage community members to share their opinions on matters of local importance. Those who offer and share their good-faith concerns with our office can be assured we always provide a listening ear and honest reflection.



concerns and on top of important issues.

Heather Pendleton: Civic involvement, community service, and attendance at local meetings provide a unique avenue for community members to voice concerns and perspectives outside of the Prosecutor's Office. I've learned, as current Chairman of the Hancock County Republican Party Executive Committee and through my 21 years of service to the GOP, that being respectful and actively listening are vital to effective communication, even if you disagree with what's being said. My philanthropic endeavors include the Hancock Parks Foundation, Pheasants Forever, Children's Trust, Pierce's Crew, and Open Arms Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis Services. Each of those organizations have provided me with valuable lessons in communication and collaboration, to better our community. As Prosecutor, I will continue to be active and visible in my community, to ensure I remain in tune with community

Q. How do you plan to engage with local businesses to understand their concerns and gather input when making decisions that may impact them?



Sean M. Abbott: A strong business and agricultural presence is the backbone of our community and Hancock County has thrived because of the efforts of our business and agriculture leaders. For our business and agricultural community to continue thriving, we must maintain a strong law enforcement presence with policies focused on keeping our community safe. Our county prosecutor must actively engage in our business community and seek all stakeholders' input when formulating policy decisions. This collaborative effort will continue to bring many opportunities within our community. I have a strong business background with a business degree. I am a former Hancock County small business owner and have worked in a large corporation. As a current private practitioner, I understand the efforts and dedication required to run a successful business and will actively seek input from our

business community. A strong business presence coupled with a safe community will continue to make Findlay and Hancock County an attractive destination for families.



Heather Pendleton: Marsy's Law, also known as the Ohio Crime Victims' Bill of rights, protects the rights of victims, including businesses. The Prosecutor's Office takes victim's rights very seriously. We have support staff specifically trained on Marsy's Law and victim's rights, including restitution. Restitution is an important aspect of our staff's training, because theft is one of the most frequently prosecuted felonies involving local businesses. At the onset of a case, theft or otherwise, our Prosecutor's Office contacts the business about completing a Victim Impact Statement, which includes questions about economic loss and restitution. Theft results in (direct) economic losses to the business and (indirect) increased costs to our community. As Assistant Prosecutor, I've worked with business owner(s) and/or loss prevention staff to prosecute theft crimes and fight for restitution to make these businesses

"whole". The Prosecutor's Office will continue to engage businesses early on in the process so their concerns are heard, considered, and represented in Common Pleas Court.

Q. What specific strategies and initiatives would you champion to effectively increase engagement and communication with the people you represent and/or protect, ensuring their voices and concerns are heard and addressed?



Sean M. Abbott: Trust and strong relationships are important for all elected officials. This is especially true of the county prosecutor, who directly influences law enforcement policies and criminal justice. A county prosecutor must always be willing to engage with community members and its various stakeholders. The prosecutor must proactively educate our community on important legal issues. As an assistant prosecutor, I championed submitting articles for publication in our local newspaper and presented on the risks and consequences of engaging in risky behavior to local schools. I intend to continue this mindset in Hancock County to educate and inform our community members. I will build strong relationships with our county elected officials and their offices to ensure efficient government operations. Our decisions will be based on reason and common sense, with full input from community stakeholders. I

plan to continue my involvement with the community organizations I am already an active participant (Rotary, United Way, church, etc.) while having regular events open to the public.



Heather Pendleton: As Assistant Prosecutor, I am currently managing the redesign of the Hancock County Prosecutor's Office website. The new website design includes easy-to-follow procedural flow charts to assist the general public, simplified definitions for common legal terms, and links to other offices and supporting agencies. In addition to the new website design, my vision for the Prosecutor's Office includes expanding online access and other methods of electronic communication with the community. As we know from our own daily lives, electronic communications are time, date stamped. We could use that time, date information to ensure we are responding to communications in a timely fashion. Since much of this infrastructure is already in place, improving and expanding these services would be provided at little to no additional cost to the taxpayers.

The Chamber Encourages You to Review the Entire Ballot

Please be informed and carefully review all of the issues on the March 19th ballot for Hancock County.
A complete list (and ballot text) can be found at HancockBoardofElections.com.

Local Issues

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| Issue 1 : Arcadia LSD | Renewal of 2.5 mills for the purpose of avoiding an operating deficit for 4 years |
| Issue 2 : Arcadia LSD | Annual income tax of 1% for 5 years for the purpose of current operating expenses |
| Issue 3 : Bluffton EVSD | Renewal 3.541 Mills for 5 years for the purpose of avoiding an operating deficit |
| Issue 4 : Riverdale LSD | Additional 2.0 Mills for the purpose of general permanent improvements for a continuing period of time |
| Issue 5 : Hancock County Board of Developmental Disabilities | Renewal 2.50 Mills for the purpose of providing for the operation of community programs and services authorized by county boards of developmental disabilities, for the acquisition, construction, renovation financing, maintenance, and operation of developmental disabilities facilities for 5 years |
| Issue 6 : Hancock Park District | Replacement 0.8 Mill for the purpose of maintaining, improving, developing and promoting the Hancock Park System, conserving natural resources, acquiring additional parks and developing new recreational facilities as the Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioners deems appropriate, and enabling the Hancock Park District to support parks and recreational facilities owned or operated by townships, villages, and cities located throughout Hancock County for 8 years |