1. Monroe County Government is the recipient of nearly $30 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds. What are your top priorities for the use of this funding?

It is the Commissioner’s responsibility to make a plan for spending the ARPA funds. We have made a decision about what we want to fund, but we have not yet prioritized it. The plan is a fluid one that is subject to change.

My particular priorities are:

* Revenue replacement.
* Criminal justice reform.
  + Improving local mental health opportunities can be considered to be a subsidiary of criminal justice reform.
  + Responding to gaps in community resources that have been identified in the criminal justice report.
* Affordable housing.
  + Supporting the United Way’s Heading Home program.
  + Infrastructure for development of housing.
* Affordable childcare.
* Affordable healthcare
* Storm water and infrastructure improvements.
* Countywide public transportation
* Expansion of broadband services.
* Incentives for County employees to get COVID vaccinations. (This has already been funded and is in place currently.)

1. As Monroe County revamps its zoning regulations, how should the county government balance its rural and urban character? What principles guide your approach to the county development ordinance (CDO)?

* There should be a hard line between urban and rural areas, with highest density closest to the most urban areas and decreasing from there.
* Any development should be compatible to the area in which it is occurring.
* Critical drainage areas should be avoided.
* Vulnerable features should be protected.
* Habitat fragmentation should be avoided.
* Anytime more land is put under impermeable surface the County’s drainage problem gets a bit worse. Very careful thought should be given to protecting current residents from flooding caused by nearby development.

1. In 2017 the Monroe County Council adopted a food and beverage tax for the purpose of expanding the existing Monroe Convention Center. In what ways can Monroe County Government and the City of Bloomington work together to achieve meaningful progress toward the convention center expansion project?

I was serving on the Council at the time the tax was adopted, and I was one of three members who voted against it. Not because I had anything against the Convention Center, but because I didn’t believe that was a good funding source. I would have preferred to work to get the Inn Keeper’s tax raised.

I believe the best way to get the project moving forward is to immediately form a seven member Capital Improvement Board to oversee the construction. It would be necessary for the County and City to have equal representation of three appointments each. To create an uneven number of members, the members appointed by the county and city should choose a seventh member.

I do have some concerns over whether the convention business will completely recuperate.

1. Do you believe the lack of housing stock supply in Monroe County is a major issue? If so, what avenues would you take to address it?

Construction has been booming in the county. The problem is the desire on the part of many developers to build the wrong kind of housing in the wrong places. No inventory has been done of the housing we currently have, but I feel confident what is most needed is low rent housing. The county is actively supporting a plan the United Way and Community Foundation have been developing to provide low and moderate income housing in this community. It is called Heading Home and has garnered much community support.

The County has also invested in Habitat for Humanities’ Osage Place which is an affordable neighborhood with a mixed variety of housing.

The County Comprehensive Plan identifies North Park as an ideal location for affordable development. There is significant space available there that has adequate drainage and is without Karst features. The county is investing in infrastructure in the area to make it more desirable for affordable housing.