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TOP STORY

WAUKESHA COUNTY BOARD

# Incumbent Nelson challenged by opponent Harland for District 18 seat

Freeman Staff  
Mar 6, 2024

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Left: Thomas Harland. Right: Larry Nelson (incumbent).

Submitted photo

WAUKESHA COUNTY — Incumbent Waukesha County Board Supervisor Larry Nelson is facing off against challenger Thomas Harland for the District 18 seat.

The Freeman asked both candidates questions ahead of the April 2 election. Here are their responses:

**Freeman: Why are you running for this position?**

**Harland:** I am seeking to serve as supervisor for several reasons. First, I will look at the various issues from a new viewpoint to find a better way to get the job done. This fresh perspective hasn't been available to district voters for over a decade. Second, I will look to invest tax dollars with a stewardship mindset. Finally, I am looking to



serve my neighbors because I genuinely love this community and want the best for the district and county. I want to leave my four boys with a Waukesha County that is better than ever.

**Nelson:** I have the experience, vision, and leadership that gets results for Waukesha. As HR and HHS Board Chair, I led the successful fight to expand embedded mental health professionals working with our Sheriff's Department, Waukesha Police, emergency call center and new Crisis Stabilization Center. I led the important fight for the compensation ordinance which is helping us retain and recruit the best people to work for us. As JCC (which oversees our mental health center) Chair and Co-Chair of the Heroin Task Force, I'm running to make sure these efforts all continue to grow and improve lives in Waukesha.

**Freeman: What is the most pressing issue facing this municipality?**

**Harland:** The most pressing issue we face is the decay of society and its wide-reaching impacts regarding the ability to protect those we love. We can all see that the world around us is broken and not as it should be. Waukesha has seen recent attacks by organized crime from Chicago and the county budget continues to face increasing cost-to-continue requests across the departments meant to protect.

I want to acknowledge that government cannot solve every problem, but I do believe that a core responsibility of any elected official is to ensure the safety of the residents.

**Nelson:** Maintaining the high quality of county services (17 departments including courts, DA, sheriff, HHS) while keeping taxes as low as possible is always the most pressing issue. I chair the annual HHS Public Hearing and Community Needs Presentations, which help our HHS Board give the county executive important input on the budget. I'm proud to have voted for 12 budgets that have kept us with the



second lowest county tax rate in Wisconsin with a AAA bond rating that has saved hundreds of thousands of dollars along with fighting for our county/city Wellness Clinic that has saved taxpayers \$83 million!

**Freeman: What are your thoughts on housing challenges faced by people who want to live here?**

**Harland:** The 18th district has a wide variety of options available to anyone looking to move. From first-time homes to new-build homes and apartments, residents can enjoy quality schools with great access to city and county parks. The challenge that potential homeowners will face is the same across the nation as our currency has been devalued through reckless policies at the federal level. Elevated interest rates are depressing the desire to sell or buy homes. Many residents that I have spoken to are being seeing their personal finances challenged by recent re-assessment of property values.

**Nelson:** Affordable and adequate housing is crucial if we want to be one of the best places to live. I was honored to be on the National Association of Counties Housing Task Force. I've shared solutions with elected officials and nonprofits. As Vice Chair of our Community Development Block Grant Board, I'm proud of my votes to help fund 30 nonprofits that includes money for the winter emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, rent assistance, eviction prevention, and case management. Finally I represent the county executive on the Community Action Coalition Board whose mission is to end poverty, helping people with housing needs.

**Freeman: What do you think about developments coming to the area?**

**Harland:** I welcome change and will work with organizations to first redevelop currently empty locations. Specifically, the district is reaching the point where we will need to consider increasing density of new developments over green field expansion. I mourn the loss of green space along the Fox River and would strive to protect the remaining open spaces surrounding Waukesha. We have witnessed many

examples of re-development working well. Specifically, the Carroll University properties, The Corners of Brookfield, and many new housing options in downtown Waukesha. The largest consideration for development is the need to address the infrastructure to support this re-development.

**Nelson:** Economic development is key for Waukesha County to continue to grow, prosper, and expand our tax base to support our exceptional services, great schools, and be a wonderful place to live. That's why I voted to fund the Center for Growth, which has retained and recruited quality businesses. It's why I voted to complete the West Bypass, which brought us Sendik's as well as other businesses and needed housing near West HS. I've worked to get Great Lakes water, which has not only solved our water issues but is also attracting new development.

Learn more about me at [larrynelsonforsupervisor.com](http://larrynelsonforsupervisor.com).



**Waukesha County District 18 map**  
Updated 1 hr ago

## Meet the candidates

**Thomas Harland**

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Director of operations for LKQ Corp

**Years lived in the district/city/town/village:** 4 in District, 25 in Waukesha County

**Previous elected office (if any):** None

**Larry Nelson (i)**

**Age:** 69

**Occupation:** Retired English teacher & Waukesha County Supervisor, District 18

**Years lived in the district/city:** 32 years in District 18; 47 years in Waukesha

**Previous elected office:** Waukesha Alderman 2000-2006; Waukesha Mayor 2006-2010; Waukesha County Supervisor 2012-Present

