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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** A little long. But I have to tell you, there's it was kind of in. Okay. You can suck me.

[00:00:06] **Speaker 2** Okay.

[00:00:07] **Speaker 1** We are good. Yep. Everyone with us. Let's start with the beginning of your story. When did you first get into politics? Because you serve on the County Board Council home on Saturday.

[00:00:17] **Speaker 2** You know, once I retired from the City Green Bay Police Department, I got active in both the county, you know, the county board and also being in city council. And that was about 14, almost 15 years ago now.

[00:00:33] **Speaker 1** How do you like that experience?

[00:00:35] **Speaker 2** It's been a great experience, especially the way it's over the years. We've watched the county board evolve to where it is today. It's in it's a you know, on the county, we're nonpartisan, both been on person. And, you know, we have probably lots of people that live. Right. And as the chair, it's my job to bring those people together to help get things done. But one thing I'm very proud of our our current board and last couple of years, our board is we've gotten a lot done and we we a lot less fighting amongst ourselves. It's just we we just get stuff done which is good to see.

[00:01:16] **Speaker 1** So when you heard that the maps were going to be redrawn there giving you districts, were you thinking of running? Once that seat became open, it was apparent there wasn't going to be a Republican incumbent. What was that process like for you?

[00:01:28] **Speaker 2** Well, actually, I was down in Madison with the Wisconsin Restaurant Association. I actually doing some lobbying. At the Capitol, and it was brought to me that, you know, there's the vote was going to happen with, you know, about the maps. And, you know, they said your district, your area where you live potentially would be open. Would you be interested in running? And, you know, I, I thought about it a little bit, but I happened to be there a week later with the Wisconsin Counties Association. And I was asked again a couple of times, and that's where I really started to think about it. It was a case where because of the redistricting, it left this as in basically the new district open seat.

[00:02:15] **Speaker 1** There's been there was a history, I guess, going back to the early 20 tens and kind of that Tea Party area era where Republicans tried to get people from outside of government, people with very little political experience because they wanted new people, not career politicians. And now they realize that sometimes people not having experience of local units of government and that they had a steep learning curve in the capital. So what's the difference in recruiting someone like you who obviously knows how local government should run? You know, trying to bring that mentality down to making the state?

[00:02:45] **Speaker 2** You know, I look at and I did look at when I was thinking about running for this position. So what do I have to offer the state as a as an assembly person? And I looked at, you know, retired police officer. So I understand what law enforcement is going through. Actually, the whole criminal justice system. And I have that I have my experience as an alderman. I have my experience as a county board supervisor. And and that is, to me is really invaluable experience on how levels of government work. You know, as a county, we do we're basically an arm of the state. We do a lot of the implement a lot of the state work at the county level. And I also have my business background. So I think I have a diverse background to bring down to the state. And what I'm most proud of is how we work currently at the at the county. And again, we have more of a getting it done atmosphere.

[00:03:56] **Speaker 1** With that in mind, how what would it be like to step into a legislature where there is quite a bit of dysfunction, There's a lack of trust between all the different branches, sometimes within their own party, sometimes working across the aisle where, you know, they like to talk about all the bills that are bipartisan. And those are the slam dunks, Right. Real hard work takes a long time to get done if it gets done.

[00:04:18] **Speaker 2** And you know what? I started at the county and the city council, life wasn't always perfect there. And but what it's taught me is how to truly actually talk across the aisle and how to communicate with each other. In this case would be other assembly people, whether they're on the right side, the left side, we got to hear it may sound cliche, but you know what's in the best interest for the state of Wisconsin?

[00:04:53] **Speaker 1** Talking about county government or local government. There's been a lot of county officials and city officials in the state that feel that the legislature has underfunded the money that comes back to the local government. For the last decade, there was an infusion in this last budget. How do you view do you think the state has done their share in terms of passing along enough dollars for you to get your work done here?

[00:05:15] **Speaker 2** You know what? The counties always take more. Sure. However, you know, I think the state. Has always has done a good job in the last budget and in bumping up what the municipalities and counties need. Is it done yet? I'm not sure I want to get there and see what what more can be done. I think it's it's one of those processes that has to be evaluated. You know, every budget, you know, where are we at? You know, right now, they they talk about having a three plus billion dollars surplus. Big question is what will you spend that on? Well, first of all, we don't have it yet. We want to make sure we have it. Second of all is why do we have it? Because that's taxpayer money that especially right now with the economy the way it is, maybe that money can be better spent in the hands of the taxpayer versus in the hands of the government.

[00:06:20] **Speaker 1** When it comes to balancing things like the number of municipalities or school districts going to referenda for operating funds versus a tax cut that goes back into someone's pocket. Where do you see the value of whether the state can spend, whether there is a surplus or how big it is to make it so they don't have to go to referenda and ask in the first place or give it back to the taxpayers and they get to approve a referendum if they want.

[00:06:44] **Speaker 2** You know, I guess in every case for a referendum, it's different. And. The question I have is why are we always having to go to a referendum? At what point in time is some of the stuff that built into the budget? And to consider going back to the taxpayer and back to the taxpayer. Puts them in a situation where they have to decide, you know, can I afford to buy these eggs that have gone up 3 or 4 times? You know, I remember when it was 259 for five dozen eggs at Walmart and now it's $12. So I think. Government really has to look at how they're spending their money. And do we need. Do we need to have this referendum? You know, what's our long term goal? We've got to think pass you know, this this budget and and look at how we can benefit the taxpayer. I look at Brown County and what what we've done there. With the county board working in concert with the county executive and his staff. You know, we're taking our our debt, which is over a $150 million years ago or about five, five years ago. And at the end of this year, we're going to be just a little bit over 35 million. And we're projected to have that paid off in the next five, six years. But. Well, that's. It's a county up. Long term. Puts him in a very good position. And right now, we're paying for everything in cash at the county. If we're building and redoing roads, building the new library here in Ashwaubenon. You know, we're trying to look from a different perspective and try to spend smart versus just spending.

[00:08:40] **Speaker 1** When you look at the race here, 5050 district across the river, another 5050 district, you know, the state Senate race here, 5050 district. And the US congressional race is not quite 5050, but it's going to be competitive. This is an open seat. How do those all play together in terms of voters being aware of the significance of all of these races that are going to be on the ballot for them?

[00:09:02] **Speaker 2** You know, I've knocked a lot of doors in the last couple of months here, and a lot of people aren't aware of the changes yet. And a lot of it is just educating them. Hey, the 89th Assembly is basically a new district and this is how it's set up. I spend a lot of my time just explaining that part of it to them, and I think that will play. Yeah. But I think at the end of the day, we have a good portion of people out there that. Are still interested in the candidate, what they stand for and what they've done or what they will do. And I don't think it's always, always about left or right.

[00:09:44] **Speaker 1** The Democrats that are running up here are pretty eager to talk at the doors about how we actually have a chance of maybe retaking the assembly and making things a lot closer. When you talk to voters, are they thinking bigger picture of how this particular race plays into who controls the assembly or how that may factor into a bigger picture?

[00:10:02] **Speaker 2** No, they're looking at how is it going to affect them? How are voting for me? How does that affect them? And one thing I try to make clear when I'm at the doors, at the end of the day, I'm representing all the people in my district, not just the ones that identify as a D or an R, and some just, you know, identify as independent or just want to go to the voting booth and just make their own mind up at that time.

[00:10:31] **Speaker 1** So you, I'm sure better than most people would have an idea of what it's like to actually meet a real swing voter. What's it like to catch one in the wild? What's that experience like to interact with?

[00:10:40] **Speaker 2** You know, it's it's interesting because of the perspective. One thing I do like about when I'm not going to doors is when I get into a conversation with somebody. If you know, they're telling me how they feel, it helps me learn about, okay, this is what the voters going through, this is what the concerns are with the voter.

[00:11:01] **Speaker 1** So what are your feelings on Donald Trump and what he brings to the Republican ticket?

[00:11:07] **Speaker 2** Well. With Donald Trump. I would say his policies are far better than what we've had for the last four years. Unfortunately, we have some issues on the delivery of the policies, if you will. And, you know, when I look at going back to the primary, you know, it wasn't necessarily my first choice in the primary, but he's on he's on that part of the ticket. So. We'll look at the policies. I'd prefer to look at the policies. And are you better off today than you were four years ago? I'd argue no, you're not. And I just don't think that that the voter. See that they're better off.

[00:11:59] **Speaker 1** We've seen quite a few elections in the past two years and 22 Tammy Baldwin in 22. Where I'm sorry in 2018, where Democrats running statewide have outrun and actually won in Republican Assembly seats down ballot. Showing that people will separate based on different levels of government. Do you think that could happen again, that if if Harris wins Wisconsin or Tammy Baldwin be tubby, that that doesn't necessarily mean anything for your district depending on the shoe leather you're working on?

[00:12:31] **Speaker 2** Yeah. You know, I think at the end of the day, people still understand. They still want to have the choice to vote for the candidate that best aligns with what they want to see in the future. So just because they vote, you know, for one, one person or the other doesn't mean down the ticket that, you know, it's going to be a straight ticket.

[00:12:53] **Speaker 1** I mean, Robin Vos has made that point over and over. He said that it's candidates working hard are the reasons that Republicans keep winning large majorities. Yup. I'm sure you feel that.

[00:13:02] **Speaker 2** Yeah. Yeah. It's, you know, hitting doors indoors and going out and talking to people, going on, talk to people and talking with people such as yourself.

[00:13:11] **Speaker 1** Do you hope to stay on the county board and continue some of the local government if you win the seat first?

[00:13:19] **Speaker 2** I want to win the seat. That's my main priority at that point. And at that point, I will determine, you know, what my future is with the county board. I've been very blessed on the county board. I've had a lot of great experiences in and work with a lot of great people there. So, yeah, I kind of hate to lose that that that working relationship. And I think that there is you know, the nice thing about that is I working in the county level you know I can really see what the needs are the county to take to the state first hand.

[00:13:57] **Speaker 1** Do you think? People go to the ballot. There are still going to be some people that are surprised at the names on their ballot because they are just they're not that tuned in and because the new districts. What is the effect, then of the whole ticket at that point? Do you think there's going to be an undervote when it comes down ballot versus the top of the ticket? Or how will that play out with this?

[00:14:22] **Speaker 2** You know, to be honest. I can't tell you that because I think this election like. We know some of the past here. It just it could be all over the board on how how different things affect in what what's going on right now could change three weeks from now. And it's just too early to tell how one person's going to affect the different part of the ticket.

[00:14:49] **Speaker 1** So it wasn't that long ago that coming off the debate, the Democrats were in not a very good mental state. And then going into the RNC, Republicans were unifying behind Donald Trump. And then we saw change. And now there seems to be a different feeling. The market for came out yesterday and talked about Suzy as a woman. Voters and Democrats, it's way up. What are you sensing when you talk about whether people are actually enthusiastic and excited to go vote this fall.

[00:15:18] **Speaker 2** In knocking on doors? A lot of people haven't really thought about it yet and haven't been putting that much energy into it. They're just starting to wake up to, okay, there's an election coming down the road. And I just haven't seen that much energy yet as some of the pundits on TV like to portray.

[00:15:43] **Speaker 1** So what is that disconnect? Is it just people living their normal lives or tuned in that oversees the bubble that exists over there?

[00:15:50] **Speaker 2** Well, I think that you have some media that creates some sense. How should I say? That creates the hype. And and I think that they're not in tune with what the actual voter is dealing with. You know, every day. And that's where I think it's a case where when I'm knocking doors and talking to these people, I probably have a better understanding of what the needs are to a lot of these people than somebody sitting in a studio in New York.

[00:16:31] **Speaker 1** It's it seems clear from talking to everyone and everyone living here that, you know, prices, inflation, those are all real everyday issues. Democrats are also trying to make abortion still an issue. Obviously, in 22, when it was a fresh new ruling and a new experience, it really was. Do you think that still plays or is that just them trying to push that as a talking point and hoping.

[00:16:51] **Speaker 2** That still works? You know, I really think that it's them just trying to push that as a talking point because. If you look at the the accounting economy we're in and the inflation we've gone to. That's all been the last three and a half years. And you know, the what's happening down in the border, What's happening with our crime, that's all the last three years. And so, yeah. Do they want to change the narrative? Yeah, they do.

[00:17:20] **Speaker 1** What is your your stance on abortion? Because that is something that the state could still need to weigh in and and try and clarify as far as exceptions or time periods or any of that kind of thing.

[00:17:29] **Speaker 2** It's a very divisive topic. And I think that, you know. It's not as simple as left and right because you have people on both sides of the aisle that feel differently about it. And I look at an issue like this. Is this is this the issue that you have a referendum for where you actually let the voters of Wisconsin decide? Because, you know, I'm out here to represent my district and that's what I'll do. But, you know, with the topic such as this, that can be so divisive, you know, that might be the best place for it might be in a referendum.

[00:18:17] **Speaker 1** I mean, that's Ron Johnson's theory that would require the legislature to act. So you say you you'd be willing to vote to put it to a binding referendum?

[00:18:25] **Speaker 2** Yes.

[00:18:27] **Speaker 1** Right. Anything else that you want to add along the lines that you're talking about or any other things that are important to you in this race that you see?

[00:18:33] **Speaker 2** You know. As a former police officer as being in the county where I was the public safety chair for many, many years and I was a county board chair, I still look at every one of the issues in Brown County, and the crime issue is the fentanyl and the opioid issue that has to stay front and center for not only Brown County but for the state of Wisconsin. And I think, you know, our overall our our criminal justice system, when I when I get to Madison, I think I bring a different look at it because, you know, in Brown County, you have almost 4000 cases waiting to just go to the courts, to just go to the courts, and.

[00:19:23] **Speaker 1** That.

[00:19:24] **Speaker 2** They can't sit there for years on end waiting to be adjudicated. You know, first of all, we have people that do commit crimes have a right to a speedy trial. Secondly, we can't even get to that point if we can't even get them to do so. You know, we've been working on it at the county level, but it really is a state level type of topic and that that really has to be addressed.

[00:19:51] **Speaker 1** What what would you like to see the state do? I mean, obviously, Wisconsin is on the wrong border when it comes to trying to stop the thing and interstate commerce. It's nearly impossible to stop it at the border.

[00:20:03] **Speaker 2** You know, it's similar to what we've done in the in the county. We've taken basically a two prong approach to it. We have the enforcement end of it. Obviously, we have our our drug unit and we have people that we put on just to address the opioid deaths. And the other side of it is the the. The addiction part of it and working with working through the addiction part of it with people, both those things take funding and. That's where the state's going to help out. If we need more funds out there. To squash this. This basically what would be an epidemic of of fentanyl or opioid abuse.

[00:20:54] **Speaker 1** And most of those programs run through the.

[00:20:55] **Speaker 2** County as well. Correct? Correct. So, I mean, that that's a huge, huge issue in the county. I actually I should say statewide.

[00:21:08] **Speaker 1** Anything else? No. All right. Thank you so much for taking time. I appreciate it. We are good here. So we would like to go through some doors with you. Okay. So I will give you this deal. I tell everyone.