

ELECTIONS

Lee County Commissioner Petrosky won't answer candidate questionnaire ahead of election



Charlie Whitehead

Fort Myers News-Press & Naples Daily News

Aug. 14, 2026, 12:20 p.m. ET

Key Points

Incumbent Lee County Commissioner Trish Petrosky declined to answer questions from The News-Press & Naples Daily News.

Petrosky was appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis and faces Republican Amanda Cochran in the August 18 primary.

The winner of the primary will become the commissioner for District 5, as there are no other party challengers.

Lee County Commissioner [Trish Petrosky](#), the incumbent in [District 5](#), has declined to answer questions submitted by The News-Press & Naples Daily News to her and her campaign on July 1.

Petrosky, who was [appointed to the office](#) by Gov. Ron DeSantis in December, faces fellow Republican Amanda Cochran in the Aug. 18 primary. Because there is not a Democrat or other-party challenger, all registered Lee County voters, not just Republicans, are eligible to cast a ballot in the race. The winner will later be [sworn in as commissioner](#).

The questions posed by The News-Press & Naples Daily News were designed to give voters a sense of the candidates' political positions on some local issues,

including growth and development; the county's budget and taxes; environmental preservation and water quality, and government transparency and accessibility.

The questions were submitted in writing, and answers would have been included verbatim, however, Petrosky's campaign consultant said that she was declining to answer because they considered some previous News-Press coverage to be "biased and agenda driven."

On the campaign trail, [Petrosky has talked](#) about making infrastructure keep up with growth and not borrowing or bonding money to do it. She has pitched open communication with the public. She said she wants to control taxes and match county spending to available funding.

Cochran answered the written questions posed by The News-Press & Naples Daily News as did dozens of other candidates running for various local, state and national offices in Southwest Florida.

About Lee County Commission District 5

District 5 covers much of northeast and east Lee County, including Lehigh Acres, Alva and Buckingham.

Petrosky was appointed to the seat after [Commissioner Mike Greenwell died](#) in October 2025. She and her husband bought a home in the district — in Alva — in late October 2025. Previously, her personal and professional lives were most recently based in other parts of Lee County.

When she was appointed to the commission seat, the governor's office said:

"Petrosky is an Executive Assistant at Evangelical Christian School. Previously, she served as a Realtor for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices in Estero and was

a member of the Naples Area Board of Realtors and the Bonita Estero Realtors Association. Petrosky attended Palm Beach State College and is currently working towards her bachelor's degree from Liberty University."

Cochran, a businesswoman who has lived in the district for many years, ran against Greenwell in 2024, but lost countywide, falling short by 55-45 percent despite winning 15 of 17 precincts in the district.

Petrosky's campaign flush with money, some invested in TV and mailers

Petrosky's campaign is well-funded. At the end of July, her coffers had received over \$248,000. Her PAC [Friends of Trish Petrosky](#) had received another \$180,000, all of it from other political committees, including one controlled by her [campaign consultant Terry Miller](#), one by Commissioner Kevin Ruane and one by State Rep. Tiffany Esposito.

The campaign has been the most expensive in the county. As of the end of August, Petrosky had raised \$283,660. Cochran had raised \$190,475.99.

Her commercials have been on TV, and her mailers have been in mailboxes, including two from Miller PACs that drew a rebuke from Republican Executive Committee chair Mercedes Price-Harry for what she called attack ads.

Another mailer was financed by the Realtors PAC. Petrosky has also received financial support from the four other sitting commissioners.

Cochran funded a large portion of her own campaign, investing \$135,000 of her own money.

Do you have an opinion about this topic? Write a letter to the editor and send it to letters@naplesnews.com and/or mailbag@news-press.com. Keep it to 250

words or fewer and include your contact info. Have more to say: Send a guest column of no more than 600 words.

Charlie Whitehead covers Lee County and Fort Myers. Reach him at cwhitehead@gannett.com

Reporter Mickenzie Hannon contributed to this story.

Please support local community journalism and stay informed about Southwest Florida news by subscribing to The News-Press and Naples Daily News; download the free News-Press or Naples Daily News app, and sign up for daily briefing email newsletter, food & dining and growth & development newsletters at news-press.com or naplesnews.com.