

VOTE 411

KENT COUNTY VOTERS' GUIDE

Nov. 4, 2025 | General Election

Covering races in Kent County, Michigan

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*The League is a **nonpartisan** organization.*

VOTE 411

ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED



WHAT IS VOTE411?

Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, VOTE411.org is a "one-stop shop" for election-related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and state-specific information on the following aspects of the election process:

- Absentee ballot information
- Ballot measure information, if applicable
- Early voting options, if applicable
- Election dates
- Data on candidates in various federal, state, and local races
- ID requirements
- Polling place locations
- Registration deadlines
- Voter qualifications
- Voter registration forms
- Voting machines

YOUR VOTER GUIDE

Access personalized ballot and information on candidates — in their own words — easily on VOTE411.org. To find your voter guide, follow the steps below!

- 1** Go to VOTE411.org and enter your address.
- 2** View answers from candidates on your ballot to see where they stand on the issues.
- 3** Make your selections by checking "My Choice" for your candidate.
- 4** After making all of your selections, print selections out and use it when filling out your ballot for Election Day!

VOTE411.ORG

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Municipal-Wide Offices

City of Cedar Springs Council Member

4 Year Term

Electors vote for seven Council Members “at large” meaning that Council Members represent the entire City, not a particular district. According to Chapter IV of the City Charter, “through the departments and agencies of the City government, the Council shall provide for the public peace and health and for the safety of persons and property.”

Candidates:

Lisa Atchison

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Age 60

Occupation / Current Position Hairstylist Council Member/Mayor

Experience & Qualifications I have served on the City Council for 8 years and been Mayor for 2

Campaign Phone 616-634-6469

Education Cosmetology Degree/ Associate Degree in Business Management

Questions:

Q: What in your education and experience make you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: I am a hairstylist and have been for 40 years, so I learned how to listen to people's wants and needs and what to do to achieve those. I also was a member of the Planning Commission for over 15 years, being on this board gives you insights on the inner workings of what is coming into the City. I have also been on the City Council for 8 years and continue to pursue what's best for the Community. Two of these years I have had the pleasure of being Mayor and working on many positive changes that have come to the City.

Q: Do you have specific goals for the office and how would you work to accomplish them?

A: With the City moving into a new City Hall, there are many that can be accomplished. The staff will work on a new City Website to better get information out to the community, be it emergency, events, elections, or closings. I would like to get rid of the past negative feelings

towards the City and help the community realize that coming into and sharing their concerns with us are how they are going to be solved. We also need to concentrate on City infrastructure roads, water, and buildings with our continuous growth.

Q: What do you see as the critical challenges facing the city in the next five years?

A: We will need a new water tower and well for continued growth to keep our water clean and safe

Q: Which areas of the city budget would you work to retain, cut or increase?

A: I have been in 8 City Budget meetings and the staff is very good at looking forward at things we need to save for and putting money into those funds. Once again, we need to place a lot of importance into planning and saving for major infrastructure projects

Jill Owen

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Age 46

Occupation / Current Position Financial Analyst

Experience & Qualifications Election poll worker & Lead for 20 yrs; Current Chair CS Assessor Board of Review (certified); Current Member CS Zoning board of Appeals (secretary); Multiple years working in Gov't Accounting; Homeowner in City for last 10 yrs, Child just graduated from CSPS.

Campaign Email jowen292@gmail.com

Education Bach Degree in Accounting

Questions:

Q: What in your education and experience make you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: I believe with a background in Accounting & a "follow the numbers" way to see and understand information, it allows for a different perspective to most of the council. This will bring a new set of eyes to our current council and give a more rounded approach to decisions and issues that our City is facing.

Q: Do you have specific goals for the office and how would you work to accomplish them?

A: As we are a Council, it requires multiple brains to work together as a unit. With different perspectives and different ideas. I want to be able to see this work as it is designed to and

not have members scared to speak up and ask questions. I really want our Council to be open and the community to trust and understand decisions being made.

Q: What do you see as the critical challenges facing the city in the next five years?

A: The Biggest challenge is keeping up with our growth. With new developments and apartment complexes going in, we need to make sure all our systems are able to adequately provide for the demand it will be receiving. If this is infrastructure, services, or staff to be able to assist where needed. Also, being able to bring and maintain businesses into our downtown district.

Q: Which areas of the city budget would you work to retain, cut or increase?

A: I'd like to review and see what projects we are accruing for and the logic behind these projects. I would also like to review and see how the incoming taxes are to where we are paying for things. Even with Audits annually, I would just want to become more familiar with all the parts of the budget and if there is items that can be trimmed or not.

Rose Ellen Powell

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your education and experience make you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: Do you have specific goals for the office and how would you work to accomplish them?

A: -no response-

Q: What do you see as the critical challenges facing the city in the next five years?

A: -no response-

Q: Which areas of the city budget would you work to retain, cut or increase?

A: -no response-

Jacob Puckett

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:**Questions:**

Q: What in your education and experience make you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: Do you have specific goals for the office and how would you work to accomplish them?

A: -no response-

Q: What do you see as the critical challenges facing the city in the next five years?

A: -no response-

Q: Which areas of the city budget would you work to retain, cut or increase?

A: -no response-

City of East Grand Rapids Commissioner Ward 1

The city is governed by a seven-member City Commission, elected to four-year terms by the residents of East Grand Rapids. The mayor is elected at-large from the entire city, while two Commissioners are elected from each of the city's three wards. The City Commission sets policies, approves purchases and contracts for services, and enacts ordinances.

Candidates:

Jonathan J. Paasch

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:**Questions:**

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

Kate Skaggs

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Age 40

Occupation / Current Position Government Relations/Partner

Education B.A. Political Science; M.S. Political Science

Experience & Qualifications EGR Parks Commission 2020-2024; EGR City Commission 2024-present

Campaign Facebook Page www.facebook.com/KateSkaggsEGR

Campaign Phone 740-398-3758

Campaign Email katebowman03@gmail.com

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: City Commissioners need a pulse on the community, thoughtfulness, and diligence. I love East Grand Rapids – like many, I’m raising my family here because I value our walkable, safe community, and I believe in our schools. I’m active in the community with our kids – you can find me at the pool with Waves and on the sidelines for East FC. I’ve served residents since 2020 – first as a member of the Parks Commission, then its Chair; and since 2024 as a member of City Commission. When our parks were crumbling, I led the successful campaign to invest in them. Now, the playgrounds shared by the city and schools are vastly improved and Manhattan Park just re-opened after a complete refresh. I bring that same innovative thinking to all city issues.

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: I’m dedicated to making the changes we need: increased pedestrian safety, enhanced sustainability across the city, and community-focused improvements downtown. Our city budget is healthy. We can afford to keep our community safe by fully funding our public safety department, adding pedestrian safety lights at dangerous crossings, and replacing

sidewalk plow equipment to better manage ice. Let's implement our Climate Action Plan and limit emissions from city operations by electrifying our fleet where possible and improving building efficiency. And let's require that Gaslight Village improvements reflect our EGR values of community and walkability by including gathering space and providing safe paths through the development.

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: In East Grand Rapids, we know what makes our community strong: walkability, connection, and great schools. As plans to update Gaslight Village move forward, it's vital that they reflect these core values. Gaslight is more than just a business district — it's the heart of our community. Any investment must strengthen the walkable character, support our families, and keep East Grand Rapids a place where community comes first. My role as a City Commissioner is to advocate for these values and move the development in a direction that reflects them. We need less surface parking, safe traffic flows, a public plaza where families and neighbors come together, and a clear usage agreement for events before any proposal is complete.

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: Home values in East Grand Rapids have never been higher – a great benefit for residents, and a huge barrier to entry for new families. The city is as strong as East Grand Rapids Public Schools. Building additional housing and increasing density in Gaslight Village is essential to ensure we draw new students into our school system. Our schools draw us together; community and neighborliness are core to who we are. We must create great spaces to gather in Gaslight Village and the next phase of Waterfront Park to stay connected and ensure our local restaurants and retailers have plenty of foot traffic. Let's support festivals, events, and other creative opportunities to bring the community together.

City of East Grand Rapids Commissioner Ward 2

The city is governed by a seven-member City Commission, elected to four-year terms by the residents of East Grand Rapids. The mayor is elected at-large from the entire city, while two Commissioners are elected from each of the city's three wards. The City Commission sets policies, approves purchases and contracts for services, and enacts ordinances.

Candidates:

Erica Dunten

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:**Questions:**

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

Michael Stelter

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Age 36

Campaign Email FriendsMichaelStelter@gmail.com

Occupation / Current Position Data Engineer

Campaign Phone 616-485-4316

Education Bachelor of Marketing

Experience & Qualifications East Grand Rapids graduate and now raising my own Future EGR grads. I am not a career politician. I am a neighbor, a listener and a problem-solver. I believe in using facts, transparency and community input to drive smart decisions for the city.

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: East Grand Rapids graduate and now raising my own Future EGR grads. I am not a career politician. I am a neighbor, a listener and a problem-solver. I believe in using facts, transparency and community input to drive smart decisions for the city.

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: I want to bring fresh energy, sustainability and innovation back to East Grand Rapids. I believe East is a great community but has fallen stagnant in recent years. Resident enrollment, housing market, and commercial growth have all slowed, key indicators to a vibrant community, I want to work together to build an even more vibrant community.

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: I mentioned them above but I'll reiterate here. Resident school enrollment, housing market and commercial growth. I want to work with city departments, various boards and residents to come up with unique ideas or incentives to help promote growth in these areas of concerns.

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: I'm very community-first minded. I believe in promoting social gatherings across all and any demographics. I also believe in order to necessitate that we need proper infrastructure and community growth.

Chris Wessely

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

City of East Grand Rapids Commissioner Ward 3

The city is governed by a seven-member City Commission, elected to four-year terms by the residents of East Grand Rapids. The mayor is elected at-large from the entire city, while two Commissioners are elected from each of the city's three wards. The City Commission sets policies, approves purchases and contracts for services, and enacts ordinances.

Candidates:

Laura Schwartz

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

City of Grandville Mayor

4 Year Term

The Grandville City Council is the elected body that presides over the City. The Council is responsible for setting goals and policies for the city government, annually adopting a budget that supports city activities, and executing formal actions required by the City Charter. The City Council consists of 7 members: 6 at-large Council Members and the Mayor, who acts as chairman over the meeting.

Candidates:

Steve Maas

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

City of Grandville Council Member

4 Year Term

The Grandville City Council is the elected body that presides over the City. The Council is responsible for setting goals and policies for the city government, annually adopting a budget that supports city activities, and executing formal actions required by the City Charter. The City Council consists of 7 members: 6 at-large Council Members and the Mayor, who acts as chairman over the meeting.

Candidates:

Jason Flanigan

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Education Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and Master of Science in Computer Science

Occupation / Current Position Manager, Energy & Engineering

Age 40

Campaign Facebook Page www.facebook.com/flaniganforcitycouncil

Experience & Qualifications I am an experienced engineer and leader, currently guiding a

team focused on innovation, carbon reduction, and infrastructure strategy. I have also had the pleasure of serving Grandville for the past six years as a Planning Commissioner and as a member of the Environmental Sustainability Committee where I currently serve as Chairperson.

Campaign Website jasonflanigan.com

Campaign Phone 616-379-9712

Campaign Email jason@jasonflanigan.com

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: I bring a unique combination of public service and professional expertise. For six years I've helped guide development of our City as a Planning Commissioner and as Chair of the Environmental Sustainability Committee (ESC). I've contributed to the City's Master Plan, the long-term guide that sets our vision for land use and development. As an engineer, I manage large projects that require balancing costs, timelines, and competing priorities, all skills that directly apply to the challenges our city faces. I believe this combination of hands-on community service and professional experience makes me well prepared to serve effectively on the Council.

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: My goals are rooted in keeping Grandville strong, safe, and sustainable. First, we must maintain our core infrastructure like our roads, water systems, and public facilities. Second, we need to manage growth responsibly, making sure new development fits the character of our neighborhoods and strengthens the community we love. And third, we need to keep our city financially stable so we can continue providing the services families depend on. I have years of experience managing large budgets. I know first hand how to navigate competing interests and priorities. I also understand that the best value doesn't always come from the lowest initial cost, smart budgeting means investing wisely to serve our community now and into the years ahead.

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: Our biggest challenges ahead are maintaining aging infrastructure, ensuring growth strengthens rather than strains our city, and doing all of this responsibly. To address these challenges, I'll rely on both my engineering experience and my years of public service to help evaluate costs, set smart priorities, and make sure projects are both necessary and sustainable. As a Planning Commissioner, I helped create the development strategy for 28th Street and the Rivertown Mall, and took the necessary steps to update policies and

ordinances to ensure that the vision could move forward. I'll bring the same thoughtful and results driven approach to City Council to balance growth while protecting the character of our neighborhoods.

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: I believe a vibrant economy is about more than just commerce, it's about creating a place where people want to live, work, and raise a family. When we build a community that people are proud to call home, business investment follows. As the saying goes, "If you build it, they will come." That means investing in safe neighborhoods, well-maintained streets, quality parks and green spaces, and fostering a welcoming, compassionate community character. Together, these priorities create the foundation for lasting economic vitality.

Randy Gelderloos

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Education BA Calvin College

Occupation / Current Position Retired

Age 65

Experience & Qualifications I have had the privilege of serving on Grandville City Council since 2006. I have represented Grandville on various boards such as The Rapid Transportation Board, Kent Count Waste to Energy Advisory Committee, Kent County 911 Dispatch Authority and working with Veterans on the ESGR Committee.

Campaign Phone 616-890-4951

Campaign Email rgelderloos@yahoo.com

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: I have had the privilege of serving on Grandville City Council since 2006. I have represented Grandville on various boards such as The Rapid Transportation Board, Kent Count Waste to Energy Advisory Committee, Kent County 911 Dispatch Authority and the ESGR Committee assisting with veteran awareness.

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: My goal is to keep Grandville a vibrant place to live and for our children to learn and grow

in safe environment. I want to fight blight and crime and keep our community safe as well as providing an efficient, responsible, sustainable and transparent government.

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: Housing is one of our big challenges. I will pursue opportunities for younger families to be able to afford buying homes in our community. I want to leave Grandville a great place to live for future generations.

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: I am willing to use all the potential tools available to us as a city to increase economic development such as the Brownfield Redevelopment Act, T.I.F.S, and tax abatements. Also flexible zoning uses to increase and assist start up of small and local business and tax abatements to assist in future growth.

Sue Merrell

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Education Bachelor of Journalism, University of Missouri

Occupation / Current Position retired journalist

Age 76

Experience & Qualifications 40 years working at newspapers in 4 states (including covering city councils like Grandville)

Campaign Website electsuemerrell.com

Campaign Phone 616-318-4084

Campaign Email electsuemerrell@gmail.com

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: Journalism taught me to listen to the people and follow the facts. I believe good governance is much like good journalism.

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: My top goal is better communication with the residents. I love my city and I feel the council is making good decisions, but it faces some major challenges. For instance, many water mains need to be replaced and the council is doing a good job of selling bonds to pay

for the project but not keeping homeowners fully informed about when their street will be closed, how long the project is expected to take, and parking options in the meantime. Better communication with residents is the key to the success of this project.

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: In addition to the challenge of aging infrastructure, which I address above, the council needs to keep abreast of changes in our society. Our shopping mall is failing. We need to look into ways other communities are coping with this change in retail and see what kind of incentives we need to attract businesses that will make that area productive again. A Linked In survey recently listed Grand Rapids as a hot spot for new tech jobs. That means more folks moving to the area. Grandville needs to be ready with more apartments and housing . There's also a discussion of the Zoo building a world-class aquarium on our border. We need to plan for how that will affect our traffic, our restaurants, our hotels.

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: Grandville needs to encourage growth without losing its small town appeal. Our council knows this and is constantly working to improve "walkability" We also have an active Downtown Development Association to support local shops and restaurants that give our downtown that small town feeling. The council realizes that the "small town" needs to stretch beyond Chicago Drive and recently approved a Commercial Rehabilitation District that includes 28th Street. I believe well-controlled tax incentives can encourage business which in turn benefits the city and the entire tax base. But probably what keeps our city most vibrant is having citizens involved in street fairs, tree projects, recycling, cleaning Buck Creek, a community choir.

Mike Sullivan

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Education Bachelor of Science in Political Science and Master of Public Administration with a concentration in State, Regional, and Local Governance

Occupation / Current Position Kent County Elections Director

Age 30

Campaign Facebook Page facebook.com/sullivanforgrandville

Experience & Qualifications My past work experience includes roles with the Michigan Attorney General's Office, the Michigan State Senate, and Ada Township.

Campaign Website sullivanforgrandville.com

Campaign Phone 616-730-2481

Campaign Email mike@sullivanforgrandville.com

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: I have extensive work experience and education in the field of public administration, specifically in local government. My current employment is as the Kent County Elections Director where I manage a small team, oversee a multi-million dollar budget, and regularly interact with local government staff and elected officials. My education includes a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in State, Regional, and Local Governance from Grand Valley State University (GVSU). I am also extensively involved in the Grandville community as a parishioner of St. Pius. X church and as a member of the Grandville Tree Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: My goals include supporting public safety, fiscal responsibility, and implementation of the 2025 Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Grandville has a long history of supporting its police and fire departments and we should continue this. The City has also a strong financial footing with a balanced budget and fund balance. This must continue and we must monitor our property tax rate and ensure we are keeping our millage rate as low as possible, without compromising government services. The City recently adopted a parks & recreation master plan where citizens provided input on changes they would like to see within our parks. I believe implementation of this plan will help improve our parks and overall quality of life.

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: I believe the most important issues facing the City of Grandville include downtown economic development especially along 28th Street and redevelopment of the Rivertown Mall. We have vacant commercial space along 28th Street where I think we have a great opportunity to bring in some mixed-use development. Extension of our downtown area east with the same facade will create a more inviting space for businesses and residents. We have seen Woodland Mall take-off while Rivertown Mall continues to lag. With the new ownership of Rivertown Mall, I think this gives the City a new partner to communicate with to explore new possibilities in this space.

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: To support our vibrant economic ecosystem I will advocate for a combination of strategies that strengthen small businesses, attract investment, and foster innovation. These strategies include commercial revitalization districts, tax increment financing, streamlining licensing & permitting, upgrades to road & infrastructure, open communication & collaboration with business owners, and greater support of our Downtown Development Authority (DDA). It's important for the City to support strategies that will encourage residents to buy local. Our community events such as Christmas at the Commons are important to connect residents with local businesses and help build a greater sense of community well-being.

Tim Tanner

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Education Lansing Community College, Michigan State University

Occupation / Current Position State Licensed Real Estate Appraiser

Age 58

Campaign Facebook Page www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61577981228347

Experience & Qualifications Local business owner, Operations at Biggby Coffee, Apple, Appraiser

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: I want Grandville to remain an affordable, safe place to live and raise a family.

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: Keep property taxes to a minimum - no more millage increases. Give police and fire the resources they need to keep us safe. Reasonable budgets.

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: Rising taxpayer burdens and neighborhood safety.

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: Promote downtown development and growth. Attract new businesses and the jobs that come with it.

City of Kentwood Mayor

4 Year Term

Candidates:

Stephen Kepley

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Occupation / Current Position Mayor of Kentwood

Experience & Qualifications Board of Trustees for the Michigan Municipal League, Chair and Vice-chair of The RAPID, Executive Committee member of the Grand Valley Metro Council, Vice Chair for Kent County's Materials Management Planning Committee, EK High School's YoungLife Committee, and President of the Kentwood Community Foundation.

Campaign Website kepleyforkentwood.com

Campaign Facebook Page www.facebook.com/MayorStephenKepley

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: As Mayor of Kentwood since 2013 and the former Kentwood City Engineer and Building Official since 2003, I bring over two decades of experience in city government. I have overseen balanced budgets, expanded public safety, improved roads and infrastructure, and managed growth while keeping Kentwood one of the most affordable and well-run cities in Michigan. My background in engineering gives me the skills to solve complex problems, while my years of servant leadership have built trusted relationships with residents, businesses, and regional partners. I understand the challenges of governing and have a proven record of delivering results, making me the most qualified candidate to continue serving Kentwood's residents with integrity and vision.

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: My goals are to keep Kentwood safe, affordable, and welcoming while preparing for future growth. I will continue to prioritize public safety, maintain roads and parks, new housing starts, and support smart development that protects our neighborhoods. With limited resources, I have and will continue to focus on efficiency—leveraging grants, regional partnerships, and public-private collaborations stretching taxpayer dollars further. I will continue to work with City Commission and staff to ensure every budget decision is

grounded in fiscal responsibility, maximizing value for residents. By focusing on core services and creative partnerships, we have and will continue to meet community needs without raising unnecessary costs.

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: Kentwood faces challenges of growth, affordable housing, and public safety in a changing environment. Our diverse community also requires thoughtful engagement to build unity and opportunity. I've prioritized strong police and fire services, worked with developers to expand housing, and invested in infrastructure to keep our city connected and vibrant. I will continue engaging faith groups, nonprofits, and community organizations to strengthen connections and support services. By taking a balanced, forward-looking approach, we can preserve Kentwood's strengths while preparing for tomorrow. Above all, I have & will continue to encourage all residents to love thy neighbor—our best path to unity in a community with 90 nations & 116 languages.

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: A vibrant economy comes from attracting investment, supporting small businesses, and ensuring residents have opportunities to thrive. I will continue to champion Kentwood as a business-friendly city, streamlining processes for entrepreneurs and investing in infrastructure that supports commercial growth. At the same time, I work closely with regional partners, schools, and workforce programs to ensure we are preparing residents for good-paying jobs in today's economy. By maintaining safe neighborhoods, excellent city services, and strong public-private collaboration, Kentwood will remain an attractive place for businesses to invest and families to live, building a stronger local economy for all.

Monica Sparks

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Campaign Website www.SparksForKentwood.com

Campaign Email urbansparks1@gmail.com

Campaign Facebook Page www.facebook.com/SparksForMayorofKentwood

Experience & Qualifications Serving in my 4th term as a Kent County Commissioner, previous City of Kentwood Planning Commissioner, and Kentwood Zoning Board of Appeals. Public Service Leadership • Serving in her fourth term as Kent County Commissioner, representing Kentwood, Wyoming, and Grand Rapids with integrity, transparency, and accountability. • Member of the Finance & Physical Resources

Committee, providing fiscal o

Education Bachelors of Science in Business Administration

Age 53

Occupation / Current Position County Commissioner / Small Business Owner

Campaign Phone 616-813-9397

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: In four terms as Kent County Commissioner I've managed a \$648 Million budget, directing investments in public safety, health, housing and infrastructure for nearly 673,000 residents. I serve on local and national boards focused on aging, early childhood, veterans, immigration and economic development, bringing neighborhood-level insight and national best practices. As a small business owner, real estate broker and nonprofit leader, I understand housing, workforce and economic challenges firsthand. I lead with servant-people centered leadership, collaboration, and proven results ready to ignite Kentwood's future.

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: My goals are to make Kentwood safer, stronger, and more connected by prioritizing public safety, attainable housing, small business growth, and expanded mental health services. With limited resources, I will focus on partnerships, innovation, and accountability leveraging county, state, and federal collaborations while engaging businesses, nonprofits, and residents. By aligning budgets with clear priorities, cutting inefficiencies, and maximizing grant opportunities, we can stretch every dollar. I will also ensure transparency and invite community voices to help guide decisions. Together, we will do more with what we have while planning smartly for future growth.

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: Kentwood's most urgent challenges are public safety, attainable housing, infrastructure, economic growth, and mental health. We must invest in safe neighborhoods by supporting first responders and community policing. On housing, I'll push for smart development that balances growth with affordability. For infrastructure, we'll prioritize roads, water systems, and technology to meet future needs. As a small business owner, I know we must support entrepreneurs and job creation to keep our economy strong. Finally, expanding access to mental health resources will help families thrive. By building partnerships, leveraging grants, and ensuring fiscal accountability, we can address these challenges together.

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: To support a vibrant economy, I will focus on small business growth, workforce development, and smart investment in infrastructure. As a business owner, I understand the challenges entrepreneurs face, so I'll work to reduce barriers, encourage local hiring, and create pathways for minority- and women-owned businesses. I'll collaborate with schools, colleges, and training programs to equip residents with skills for today's jobs and tomorrow's industries. By improving roads, transit, and technology, we'll attract new businesses while supporting those already here. Partnering with regional, state, and federal resources will maximize opportunities and ensure Kentwood remains competitive and thriving.

City of Kentwood Clerk

4 Year Term

Candidates:

Cameron Duffey

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Experience & Qualifications Over 20 years of experience in document and records management, overseeing regulations, & improving how offices run day to day. I've built a career on making systems more efficient, cutting waste, & embracing smart technologies to save taxpayer dollars while improving public access & transparency. I have a history of working with government at the state and local levels keeping data safe & secure.

Occupation / Current Position Middle College Interventionist

Campaign Website www.cam4clerk.com

Age 44

Education Bachelors Degree

Campaign Phone 616-329-7411

Campaign Email camduffey@gmail.com

Questions:

Q: What in your education and experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: I hold a Bachelors Degree in Business Management. With that, I bring over 20 years of experience in document and records management, overseeing regulations, and improving

how offices run day to day. I've built a career on making systems more efficient, cutting waste, and embracing smart technologies to save taxpayer dollars while improving public access and transparency. I have a history of working with government at the state and local levels to ensure that customer data is protected, secure, and compliant with all laws and regulations.

Q: What do you see as the important challenges facing the City Clerk's office, and how do you propose to address them?

A: The City Clerk's Office faces several challenges such as managing secure, accessible elections, improving public records access, adapting to new technology, and maintaining public trust. To address these, I propose expanding voter education and access, modernizing the digitization process for all records, enhancing cybersecurity, increasing transparency through community outreach, and investing in updated staff training and materials. By modernizing systems and engaging residents, the Clerk's Office can better serve Kentwood's growing, diverse population while upholding integrity, trust, and efficiency.

Q: Do you have specific goals and how would you work to accomplish them?

A: As a current employee of East Kentwood High School, I plan to use my contacts to integrate a voter education program to students across our diverse population. I plan to do the same with the rest of our community, through the creation of multilingual education materials. I plan on hosting outreach events in our community as well. I also plan on modernizing the access to public records. I will use my experience working in document and records management to upgrade databases, digital storage systems, and search capabilities. This also includes the streamlining of the FOIA requests. I will also increase transparency of the City Clerk's office by improving communication via social media sites as well as strengthening office response times

Ana Jose

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your education and experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What do you see as the important challenges facing the City Clerk's office, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: Do you have specific goals and how would you work to accomplish them?

A: -no response-

City of Kentwood Treasurer

4 Year Term

Candidates:

Laurie Sheldon

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your education and experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What could the Treasurer's office do to improve customer service?

A: -no response-

City of Kentwood Commissioner Ward 1

4 Year Term

Candidates:

Clarkston Morgan

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

City of Kentwood Commissioner Ward 2

4 Year Term

Candidates:

Jessica Ann Tyson

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:**Questions:**

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

City of Kentwood Commissioner At Large

4 Year Term

Candidates:

Betsy Artz

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

City of Lowell Council Member

2 or 4 Year Term

Candidates receiving the 1st and 2nd highest amount of votes elected to 4 year term, 3rd highest elected to 2 year term.

Candidates:

Beryl Bartkus

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Education The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy

Campaign Phone 616-206-4925

Occupation / Current Position Pharmacist and Owner of Ability Weavers

Age 61

Campaign Email BerylBartkus@gmail.com

Campaign Website BerylBartkus.com

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

Marty Chambers

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

Mark V. Ritzema

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

James Salzwedel

Party: Non Partisan

Biographical Info:

Questions:

Q: What in your experience makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?

A: -no response-

Q: What are your goals should you be elected and how will you work to accomplish them with currently limited resources?

A: -no response-

Q: What are the most important challenges facing our community, and how do you propose to address them?

A: -no response-

Q: What will you do to support a vibrant economy in our community?

A: -no response-

Proposals

City/Township Proposals

Byron Township Proposal For 2% Excise Tax on Lodging Businesses to Fund Community Center

Shall the Township of Byron impose an excise tax on all persons engaged in the business of providing rooms for dwelling, lodging, or sleeping purposes, to transient guests, for a period less than 30 consecutive days, in the amount of 2% of the total charge for such accommodations, pursuant to Public Act 263 of 1974, as amended (“Act 263”). The levy of the excise tax would commence January 1, 2026 and would continue so long as the Township has in effect an ordinance authorizing the imposition of the excise tax.

The purpose of the excise tax is to provide funds for the acquisition, construction, improvement, enlargement, repair, or maintenance of a Township community center, which could include, but is not limited to, convention halls, auditoriums, music halls, meeting rooms, exhibit areas, and related public areas. Revenue from the excise tax will be disbursed to the Township of Byron.

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure

Lowell Charter Township Spongy Moth Suppression Millage Proposal

For the purpose of providing funds for the suppression, monitoring, and control of spongy moths within Lowell Charter Township, shall the authorized charter millage for Lowell Charter Township established at 2.10 mills (\$2.10 per \$1,000 of taxable value) and reduced to 1.7019 mills (\$1.7019 per \$1,000 of taxable value) by the required millage rollbacks, be increased by 0.50 mills (\$0.50 per \$1,000 of taxable value) for three (3) years, 2025 through 2027, inclusive, and shall the Township levy such new additional millage for the aforementioned purpose?

The following is for informational purposes: If approved and levied, this millage would raise an estimated \$184,268 in the first year of the levy.

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure

Local School District Proposals

Byron Center Public Schools Bond Proposal

Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in East Grand Rapids Public Schools, Kent County, Michigan, be increased by and the board of education be authorized to levy not to exceed .5 mill (\$0.50 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 10 years, 2026 to 2035, inclusive, to create a sinking fund for the construction or repair of school buildings; for school security improvements; for the acquisition or upgrading of technology; for the acquisition of student transportation vehicles; for the acquisition of parts, supplies, and equipment used for the maintenance of student transportation vehicles; for the acquisition of eligible trucks and vans used to carry parts, equipment, and personnel for or in the maintenance of school buildings; for the acquisition of parts, supplies, and equipment used to maintain such trucks and vans; and all other purposes authorized by law; the estimate of the revenue the school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2026 is approximately \$548,320?

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure

East Grand Rapids Public Schools Sinking Fund Millage Proposal

Description: Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in East Grand Rapids Public Schools, Kent County, Michigan, be increased by and the board of education be authorized to levy not to exceed .5 mill (\$0.50 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 10 years, 2026 to 2035, inclusive, to create a sinking fund for the construction or repair of school buildings; for school security improvements; for the acquisition or upgrading of technology; for the acquisition of student transportation vehicles; for the acquisition of parts, supplies, and equipment used for the maintenance of student transportation vehicles; for the acquisition of eligible trucks and vans used to carry parts, equipment, and personnel for or in the maintenance of school buildings; for the acquisition of parts, supplies, and equipment used to maintain such trucks and vans; and all other purposes authorized by law; the estimate of the revenue the school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2026 is approximately \$548,320?

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure

Godwin Heights Public Schools Bond Proposal

Shall Godwin Heights Public Schools, Kent County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Forty-Four Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$44,500,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, in one or more series, for the purpose of: partially remodeling, furnishing and refurnishing, and equipping and re-equipping school buildings; erecting, furnishing, and equipping an addition to the high school building; acquiring and installing instructional technology and instructional technology equipment for school buildings; purchasing school buses; and preparing, developing, acquiring, equipping, and improving playgrounds and sites?

The following is for informational purposes only:

The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2026 is 2.10 mills (\$2.10 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation), for a -0- mills net increase over the prior year's levy. The maximum number of years the bonds of any series may be outstanding, exclusive of any refunding, is twenty-five (25) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond debt is 3.66 mills (\$3.66 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

(Pursuant to State law, expenditure of bond proceeds must be audited and the proceeds cannot be used for repair or maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses.)

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure

Grandville Public Schools Operating Millage Renewal Proposal

This proposal will allow the school district to continue to levy the statutory rate of not to exceed 18 mills on all property, except principal residence and other property exempted by law, required for the school district to receive its revenue per pupil foundation allowance and renews millage that will expire with the 2026 tax levy.

Shall the currently authorized millage rate limitation of 19 mills (\$19.00 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property, except principal residence and other property exempted by law, in Grandville Public Schools, Kent and Ottawa Counties, Michigan, be renewed for a period of 5 years, 2027 to 2031, inclusive, to provide funds for operating purposes; the estimate of the revenue the school district will collect if the millage is approved and 18 mills are levied in 2027 is

approximately \$18,087,559 (this is a renewal of millage that will expire with the 2026 tax levy)?

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure

Grandville Public Schools Sinking Fund Millage Proposal

Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in Grandville Public Schools, Kent and Ottawa Counties, Michigan, be increased by and the board of education be authorized to levy not to exceed 1.4 mills (\$1.40 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 10 years, 2027 to 2036, inclusive, to create a sinking fund for the purchase of real estate for sites for and the construction or repair of school buildings; for school security improvements; for the acquisition or upgrading of technology; for the acquisition of student transportation vehicles; for the acquisition of parts, supplies, and equipment used for the maintenance of student transportation vehicles; for the acquisition of eligible trucks and vans used to carry parts, equipment, and personnel for or in the maintenance of school buildings; for the acquisition of parts, supplies, and equipment used to maintain such trucks and vans; and all other purposes authorized by law; the estimate of the revenue the school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2027 is approximately \$3,377,347?

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure

Rockford Public Schools Bond Proposal

Shall Rockford Public Schools, Kent County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Two Hundred Thirty Million Dollars (\$230,000,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, in one or more series, for the purpose of: equipping, re-equipping, furnishing and refurnishing school buildings and facilities; remodeling, erecting and acquiring school buildings, facilities and additions to school buildings and facilities; acquiring, installing, equipping and re-equipping school buildings for instructional technology; purchasing school buses; and acquiring, preparing, developing, improving and equipping athletic fields, play fields, playgrounds, structures, facilities and sites?

The following is for informational purposes only: The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2026 is .73 mill (\$0.73 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a

0.00 mills net increase over the prior year's levy. The maximum number of years the bonds of any series may be outstanding, exclusive of any refunding, is thirty (30) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond debt is 2.59 mills (\$2.59 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

(Pursuant to State law, expenditure of bond proceeds must be audited and the proceeds cannot be used for repair or maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses.)

Yes - For the Measure

No-Against the Measure

Tri County Area Schools Sinking Fund Millage Proposal

Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in Tri County Area Schools, Montcalm, Kent and Newaygo Counties, Michigan, be increased by and the board of education be authorized to levy not to exceed 1.5 mills (\$1.50 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 10 years, 2026 to 2035, inclusive, to create a sinking fund for school security improvements; for the construction or repair of school buildings; for the acquisition or upgrading of technology; for the acquisition of student transportation vehicles; and all other purposes authorized by law; the estimate of the revenue the school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2026 is approximately \$994,014?

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure

Wyoming Public Schools Sinking Fund Millage Proposal

Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in Wyoming Public Schools, Kent County, Michigan, be increased by and the board of education be authorized to levy not to exceed .4595 mill (\$0.4595 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 10 years, 2026 to 2035, inclusive, to create a sinking fund for the construction or repair of school buildings; for school security improvements; for the acquisition or upgrading of technology; for the acquisition of student transportation vehicles; for the acquisition of parts, supplies, and equipment used for the maintenance of

student transportation vehicles; for the acquisition of eligible trucks and vans used to carry parts, equipment, and personnel for or in the maintenance of school buildings; for the acquisition of parts, supplies, and equipment used to maintain such trucks and vans; for the purchase of real estate for sites for school buildings; and all other purposes authorized by law; the estimate of the revenue the school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2026 is approximately \$630,427?

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure

Wyoming Public Schools Bond Proposal

Description: Shall Wyoming Public Schools, Kent County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Twenty-Nine Million Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$29,750,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor for the purpose of: erecting and remodeling school buildings, facilities and additions to school buildings and facilities; equipping, re-equipping, furnishing and refurnishing school buildings and facilities; and preparing, developing, improving and equipping athletic fields, play fields, playgrounds, structures, facilities and sites?

The following is for informational purposes only:

The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2026 is 1.17 mills (\$1.17 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a .15 mill net decrease from the prior year's levy. The maximum number of years the bonds may be outstanding, exclusive of any refunding, is twenty-six (26) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond debt is 1.17 mills (\$1.17 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

(Pursuant to State law, expenditure of bond proceeds must be audited and the proceeds cannot be used for repair or maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses.)

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure

Intermediate School District Proposals

Kent Intermediate School District Regional Enhancement Millage Proposal

This proposal renews regional enhancement millage previously approved by the electors that will expire with the 2026 levy and restores millage lost as a result of the reduction required by the Michigan Constitution of 1963. Pursuant to state law, the revenue raised by the proposed millage will be collected by the intermediate school district and distributed to constituent districts based on pupil membership count.

Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in Kent Intermediate School District, Michigan, be renewed by .8498 mill (\$0.8498 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) and also be increased by .0502 mill (\$0.0502 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a total of .9 mill, for a period of 10 years, 2027 to 2036, inclusive, to provide operating funds to enhance other state and local funding for constituent district operating purposes; the estimate of the revenue the intermediate school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2027 is approximately \$35,606,388, which funds will be disbursed as required by statute to the following constituent districts: Byron Center Public Schools, Caledonia Community Schools, Cedar Springs Public Schools, Comstock Park Public Schools, East Grand Rapids Public Schools, Forest Hills Public Schools, Godfrey-Lee Public Schools, Godwin Heights Public Schools, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Grandville Public Schools, Kelloggsville Public School District, Kenowa Hills Public Schools, Kent City Community Schools, Kentwood Public Schools, Lowell Area Schools, Northview Public Schools, Rockford Public Schools, Sparta Area Schools, Thornapple Kellogg School, and Wyoming Public Schools, Byron Center Charter School, Chandler Woods Charter Academy, Covenant High School Grand Rapids, Creative Technologies Academy, Cross Creek Charter Academy, Excel Charter Academy, Gerald Dawkins Academy, Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center, Grand River Preparatory High School, Hope Academy of West Michigan, Knapp Charter Academy, Lighthouse Academy, New Branches Charter Academy, NexTech High School of Grand Rapids, PrepNet Virtual Academy, Ridge Park Charter Academy, River City Scholars Academy, Vanguard Charter Academy, Vista Charter Academy, Walker Charter Academy, Wellspring Preparatory High School, West MI Academy of Environmental Science, West Michigan Aviation Academy, and William C. Abney Academy, and to Kent Intermediate School District (.8498 mill of the above is a renewal of millage that will expire with the 2026 tax levy and .0502 mill is a restoration of millage lost as a result of the reduction required by the “Headlee” amendment to the Michigan Constitution of 1963)?

Yes - For the Measure

No - Against the Measure