

WHY SHOULD I VOTE FOR YOU?

A Tool to Help Question and Evaluate Candidates for Bedford Township Office

- 1) **Priorities** – What should be the top five priorities of Township Hall over the next four (4) years? (1 = most important) Why do you feel these are the top five?
- a _____ Improving police protection
 - b _____ Improving fire protection
 - c _____ Improving parks and recreation
 - d _____ Promoting economic development
 - e _____ Reducing the size of Township government
 - f _____ Full Disclosure of Township financial records (publish on Township web site)
 - g _____ Maintaining and improving infrastructure (roads, water, sewer)
 - h _____ Reducing litigation against the Township
 - i _____ Up-dating Planning, zoning and land use
 - j _____ Promoting greater fiscal responsibility and lower taxes
 - k _____ Improving services for citizens and being more customer friendly
 - l _____ Improving the use of the Township Public Access Station on Buckeye Cable.
 - m _____ Making better, bold and courageous decisions that benefit the entire township long term in spite of intense written and vocal pressure from special interest groups.
 - n _____ Recognizing and protecting the property rights of all citizens
 - o _____ Improving the use of the Township web site to communicate with residents.

Response: I have worded my priorities slightly differently than those listed above, and have not listed them in order of priority.

GOALS & PRIORITIES:

My Goals and Priorities as Township Treasurer include the following:

- **Maximize efficiency of all township business operations (we owe the public no less than our absolute best efforts)**
- **Maximize excellent customer service in all areas of the Treasurer's Department (tax administration and collections, water and sewer operations, et al)**
- **Strengthen accountability and transparency in all Bedford Township finances (publish on new township website)**
- **Implement convenient credit card payment system for payment of taxes, assessments, permits, water and sewer fees, et al**
- **Create a new Economic Development Committee, comprised of citizens with expertise in business and economic development, to work in conjunction with the Regional Growth Partnership, the Monroe County Economic Development Corporation, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and others, to make a fresh start with a change of attitude that will actively seek businesses by marketing Bedford Township as the place where Michigan begins (as we advertise on the signs along Secor Road)**
- **Continue to work tirelessly on township road improvement plan and funding alternatives**

Why do you feel that "Your top Five Priorities" are the most important?

2. What is your position on economic development for Bedford Township, especially the Temperance area? What is your plan to encourage economic development?

Bedford Township has no effective plan or vision for economic development. Economic development does not happen over night, all by itself. Over the past few years, we seem to have done our best to discourage new business from coming into Bedford Township by creating an atmosphere of negativity toward business development. We need a fresh start, with a new attitude that will actively seek businesses by marketing Bedford Township as the place where Michigan begins (as we advertise on the signs along Secor Road). If we do not "sell" ourselves, who else will? See the fourth Goal and Priority listed above relative to creation of a new Economic Development Committee for additional thoughts.

3. What is your position on "Town Hall Meetings" where township officials can meet with residents to discuss their concerns and to keep them informed of what is going on in the township? Would you be willing to have these on a monthly basis and also have them televised?

I would be in favor of holding periodic (maybe quarterly), informal "Town Hall" meetings (for discussion only), where there would be no formal agenda or action taken, where anyone would be welcome to attend, to discuss whatever concerns those in attendance wish to discuss. I suspect some may feel intimidated by the more formal atmosphere in the township board meeting room.

4. What is your position on using the Township Access TV Channel on Buckeye Cable to communicate with the public? For example, a monthly one-hour TV show hosted by the Supervisor or Clerk to get current information out to residents about various issues, township boards and up-coming meetings. Since most Township Board meetings do not last the full 3 hours that is allotted, this show could be broadcasted at the end of one of the meetings each month with the public in attendance.

Rather than start a new one hour TV show to be hosted by "someone", it seems to me that current information about various issues (current and upcoming) could and should be discussed at the end of regular township board meetings in some type of report from the administration. Information is given at board meetings now, but it could be much more informative. If quarterly "Town Hall" meetings as discussed in Question Number 3 above were to become a reality, maybe televising them could be arranged, which could accomplish much of the desired communication.

5. What is your position concerning having all board members being fully informed before decisions are made at Township Board Meetings? Do you think that there is enough discussion on issues by all board members when decisions are made currently?

I take issue with the implied premise that all board members are not fully informed before decisions are made at Township Board meetings. It has been my experience over the last eight years, that if board members do not feel they are adequately informed about any specific issue, they have not made any effort to get themselves informed. If I have questions on any issues to be considered by the board, it is part of my job as a board member to question or investigate until I am satisfied that I am adequately prepared to make an informed decision on the issue.

Regarding discussion on issues by all board members at board meetings, I see no need to simply repeat another board member's response merely to get your name in the record. If you have a new thought to raise, by all means bring it up. In my view, it's not the discussion on issues that is often missing, it's a full and complete explanation of the issue that is being decided that is sometimes missing.

6. Do you feel that the current practice of having a township attorney in attendance at all Bedford Township meetings is necessary?

No. In my opinion, at most board meetings, there are no controversial issues which may need legal clarification or advice, and therefore no need for legal counsel in attendance. If an unanticipated legal question should arise, the issue could probably be postponed until the next board meeting. However, for those meeting agendas which contain issues which may be controversial or divisive, the board may be well served by having legal counsel in attendance.

7. What do you see is your role as a member the Bedford Township Board? Do you think that all board members should take the responsibility for placing topics on the meeting agenda?

The positions of Supervisor, Clerk and Treasurer have full time administrative duties as defined by Michigan statute, in addition to legislative duties assigned to trustees. All seven board members have an equal vote in legislative matters. I believe that all seven board members should have the opportunity to place items on the meeting agendas that have come to their attention.

8. Over the past 8 years the current Bedford Township Board has made a number of important decisions. Do you agree with their decision on the following matters? If not, what is your opinion on these decisions?

a. Bedford Township was involved in 3 major lawsuits in the past 4 years which cost residents thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours of lost time by Township officials.

Generally speaking, I do not care for lawsuits, and much prefer negotiations to settle disputes. But, sometimes, parties are simply not reasonable, nor willing to negotiate in good faith. With the exception of the Whitman rezoning lawsuit, I supported the township board decisions to litigate because the issues were zoning issues effecting safety, as I recall. The Whitman rezoning issue, with all the transitional zoning buffers included, complied with the Master Plan, in the opinion of most of the land use and zoning experts who testified in court.

b. Continued the previous township board's practice of salting away taxpayers' funds (over 1 million dollars) to be used for the construction of a new township hall, even though these funds could have been used for such things as road improvements, park maintenance, police and fire protection.

I am a firm believer in maintaining a healthy Fund Balance held in reserve for emergencies or contingencies (sometimes called a "rainy day fund"). In my view, this reserve amount should be approximately 25% of the annual general fund budget. Prior to 2004, when previous township boards "salted away" one million dollars for a new township hall, the road conditions in Bedford Township were in much better shape than they are now, and the Monroe County Road Commission was in much better financial condition than it is now, and at that point in time, a new township hall building was a priority (see conditions described below).

c. Construction of a new township hall.

I supported the new township hall which was constructed in 2007. The old township hall was built in approximately 1965, had virtually no insulation (because none was used back then), had water in the crawl spaces and under the cement slabs, the windows leaked, had mold issues, and we were advised that it was not economically feasible to expand the old building to meet the current and projected future needs. The new building was designed and built to meet the projected needs of Bedford Township government for the next 75 years, and not to be a grandiose palace as some have called it. The second story was added rather than increase the size of the ground floor due to the comparative substantial cost savings. Sure, it has more space than we need currently, but it is definitely more cost efficient than the old building was ever designed to be. We have offered to rent excess space to other governmental entities in the area, but have not as yet been successful in this endeavor.

d. Denial of bringing a major retailer to Bedford on the Whitman property.

In my opinion, denial of the Whitman zoning request, with transitional zoning buffers, when in the opinion of land use and zoning experts, it did comply with the Master Plan, was the single most damaging, anti-business action that the Bedford Township Board could have taken to send the message that Bedford Township is not interested in economic development now or in the foreseeable future. Lewis Avenue was built and widened to be the commercial corridor for the Temperance area about forty years ago. How many more businesses must close along Lewis Avenue before we wake up and do something about it? Does Temperance need to revert to a ghost town before economic development becomes a priority for Bedford?

9. What are some new ideas that you would recommend if elected? What is your "Vision" for Bedford Township in the next 4 years?

- For some reason, over the years, Bedford Township has earned the reputation with our neighboring townships as being hard to work with and arrogant. I'd like to make a fresh start specifically with Whiteford, Ida and Erie townships to strengthen working relationships for roads, water and sewer issues, economic development, public safety, etc.
- Pass a road millage proposal, perhaps .5 mills (one-half mill) for five years, for specific road improvement projects
- Create and work with a new Economic Development Committee, comprised of citizens with expertise in business and economic development, to work in conjunction with the Regional Growth Partnership, the Monroe County Business Development Corporation, and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and others, to make a fresh start with a change of attitude that will actively seek businesses by marketing Bedford Township as the place where Michigan begins (as we advertise on the signs along Secor Road). It's not up to Bedford Township to create economic development. It's Bedford Township's responsibility to create the proper atmosphere, attitude, and incentives which will encourage and allow new businesses to germinate and thrive, and then get out of the way and let it happen.
- Implement a convenient credit card payment system for payment of taxes, assessments, permits, water and sewer fees, et al

10. How should the public hold you as an elected official accountable for your campaign promises and your votes?

In my view, township trustees and administrators are elected to be representatives of those who elected them, and are to put aside their personal preferences and biases, and make decisions based on what they believe to be in the best interest of the community as a whole. A board member will never please every voter with every vote he or she makes. As long as a board member has made decisions based on factual information provided, and in the best interest of the community as a whole, the board member has done what he or she was elected to do. Periodic elections are about holding elected officials accountable for actions they have taken while in office.