

Austin Mack: WHY I DESERVE YOUR VOTE TO THE BEDFORD TOWNSHIP BOARD

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 2 _____ Promoting economic development
 - e _____ Reducing the size of Township government
 - f _____ Full Disclosure of Township financial records (publish on Township web site)
 - g 3 _____ Maintaining and improving infrastructure (roads, water, sewer)
 - h _____ Improving the commercial development and revitalization of the Temperance Overlay District & the surrounding area.
 - i _____ Develop a Capital Improvement Plan for 5-10 years out.
 - j 4 _____ Practicing 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 1 _____ 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 5 _____ Improving the use of the Township web site/Technology to communicate with residents.

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

Gene, I love that you’re so involved in local politics and took time to do this survey and are asking these questions, but the list of 15 priorities and the 5 I chose don’t begin to encompass the amount of work we have to do in our Township. To build on what we have here in Bedford, and not simply maintain, will require public servants with the energy, fresh perspective, work ethic, and knowledge to reevaluate how the Township operates.

I chose my number 1 priority because as an elected official, it is your primary responsibility to make decisions that positively affect the greatest amount of people you serve. You can’t make everyone happy, but that’s what being a leader is about.

My 2nd,3rd,and 4th priorities are interchangeable. We must always maintain infrastructure while being fiscally responsible, so you must have that balance, but promoting economic development can make that balance easier to achieve. Bringing money into the Township should always be a chief priority of any administration. I was shocked to learn that currently, we have nobody writing grants and competing for grant dollars for the Township. For a population of 31,000 people, it is an inconceivable mistake to leave potential hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars off the table by not aggressively pursuing grants. Grant writing is something I do now and have done in my career, and would continue to do for Bedford Township. My 5th priority

I chose my 5th priority because today, communication between the Township and public is sadly lacking, and as a result, most residents are poorly informed on the issues. We

need to embrace and practice better methods of communication so that residents of all age levels in Bedford get involved, participate, and therefore contribute to the community. That means creating and having active social media and marketing platforms to inform people, and that also means making the township more visible in the community. It is inexcusable and embarrassing, in 2016 especially, for the Township to not simply even have a Facebook page.

2. What is your position on economic development for Bedford Township, especially the Temperance area? What is your plan to encourage economic development? **We need to be aggressive in filling up vacancies first and foremost, especially at our industrial parks. Encouraging economic development needs to be a community initiative, so improving collaboration and communication amongst ourselves can help us achieve a goal of increased economic development.**

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 and streamed live on the Bedford Township web site? **Absolutely, these monthly meetings an important part of our political process. If anything we need to figure out how to make them more attended by residents, and figure out how to have more effective meetings with more citizen interaction. And yes I would have them continue to be televised and I would be able to stream them to the Bedford Township site, even though they currently are not.**

4. What is your position on using the Township Access TV Channel on Buckeye Cable and live streaming on the Township web site 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. **Fantastic idea Gene, I'm going to steal this one.**

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? **If they are not fully informed, shame on them for not doing their homework. As far as the discussion, they are all free to discuss as much as they want, but I would like to hear everyone speak yes.**

6. There may be some tough future decisions concerning cuts to current employee and trustee benefits. Are you willing to make these cuts if necessary? **I wouldn't be able to make any cut without first getting in and doing my duty as a manager and administrator and analyzing and researching our benefits in comparison with other Townships of our size. I am willing to make any necessary change.**

7. What is your opinion of the current practice by the Bedford Township Supervisor of limiting the time for public commentary to 2 minutes concerning agenda items and 3 minutes for general comments at the end of each Bedford Township Board Meeting? Would you recommend any changes to this policy?

Yes, just commentary by the public isn't enough, people should be able to converse, ask questions, and get answers of board members. If board members don't want to be asked questions by the public, then they are in the wrong profession.

8. What motivated you to seek a position on the Bedford Township Board? 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?

I am a lifelong Resident of Bedford Township and Graduate of Bedford High School. I graduated from Michigan State University where I earned a degree in Public Policy and Administration. In my professional career I have primarily worked in the public sector, including working for the city of Toledo, during former mayor Mike Bells last term. It's been my involvement with the city where I've seen first-hand how politics, the same recycled people, department heads, administrators cause Toledo government to be ineffective, resistant to change, out of date, and have a lack of ambition to go beyond their outlined responsibilities, and I see that same exact thing with our local government here in Bedford and that's why I decided to get involved. I plan on being a very active board member, and having just as much responsibility for the agenda as anyone else.

9. How many Bedford Township Board meetings have you attended in the past year? How many times have you watched the videos of Bedford Township Board meetings during the past year? After attending or viewing past meetings, do you have any recommendations to improve the efficiency and decorum at future meetings?

I have attended about 5 or 6 board meetings the last few months, and seen many past videos that had subjects that interested me. Again my recommendation is more public interaction with the board members, and having citizens be able to ask questions and get answers right then and there.

10. What are some new ideas that you would recommend if elected? What is your "Vision" for Bedford Township in the next 4 years? **Gene how many paragraphs do you want me to write, I could go all day on this. New ideas: Aggressively pursue grants, create social media to improve communication, attract families to Bedford and our schools, build better relationships within the township and especially BPS, implement currently nonexistent Human Resource policies for Township employees, the list goes on and on.**

If there is one Macro issue I want to address in the next 4 years, it's that while Bedford Township's population has grown, Bedford Public Schools have seen an annual decline in student enrollment. As a result the BPS budget continues to suffer, even after seeing both Smith Road Elementary and Temperance Road Elementary close in 2011 and 2013. Other comparable suburbs are seeing a rise in student enrollment. Bedford's population is aging, while at the same time losing and failing to attract younger families. If we had the same student count today as we did in 2004, the schools would receive 6.58 million dollars more than they receive today.

Regression cannot be accepted in any aspect of our community, especially our schools. To progress, we need to be more competitive and active as a Township and work together to bring in young families, new business, and new growth to move Bedford Forward

11. How should the public hold you as an elected official accountable for your campaign promises and your votes? First I will hold myself accountable by always informing the public on my efforts as well as provide full disclosure of everything happening at Township Hall. If the public wants to hold me accountable, feel free to always talk to me at Township Hall, the board meetings, or contact me anytime.