

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

1. Priorities – Q: 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?

1. Writing socio-economic grants to help maintain and expand Bedford Township services and inherent obligations to as many of our residents as possible. (To me, we can keep our priorities and maintain our moral obligations and duties to the people of Bedford by seeking out and writing grants that will help maintain the grand quality of life found here in this township). [I added this priority, with permission by Gene Stock].

2. Improving police protection. (This also includes the idea that more prevention services are needed as well as increased presence. It is hoped that we can work together to seek out and develop grants to improve local D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Programs that provide children and adolescents with the strategies to live and maintain violence and drug free lives).

3. Improving fire protection. (This of course includes grants and monies for ambulatory services. As our population ages, we have an obligation to continue to and increase our ability to respond and help our constituents).

4. Making better, bold and courageous [research-based] decisions that benefit the entire township long term in spite of intense written and vocal pressure from special interest groups.
(After all, we are a representative government serving the majority of the people we represent—not special interests).

5. Maintaining and improving infrastructure (roads, water, sewer).
(To me, measures are already in place to develop and improve structures and other facilities necessary for our economy to function. Nonetheless, our township needs more financial support from the state and federal government. This includes advocating for our township at those levels as well as seeking out available grants designed to fix or improve our technical, transportation, safety, and/or health needs.

2. Q: What is your position on economic development for Bedford Township, especially the Temperance area?

A: In a short answer, sustained growth and local commitment that keeps our small businesses alive. As a kid who lived in Temperance, (albeit a short time), I wax nostalgia for the character, the feel, and the appeal of the “small town” experience. Over the years, Lambertville has grown indeed, but I think about the loss of some local businesses.

Unchecked growth reminds me of part of Sylvania, Ohio. To me, the rise “box store” businesses near Central Avenue area works but residents still maintain and support the local “main street” City of Sylvania. In the Temperance area however, there is still a sense of a small town community village and we could capitalize on that idea. Just a thought . . .

Q: What is your plan to encourage economic development?

A: To me, the township needs to work to collectively to actively commit to promote and increase local business, work to develop a local scene that supports and builds upon the idea that Temperance, Michigan has a rich history and culture—a place to stop and unwind, shop, play, and slow down. From there, economic revitalization based on realistic, local, and sustained growth might help maintain and keep the hometown character.

3. Q: 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?

A: To me, not only meeting and talking with constituents helps maintain a truly representative government, but also creating a digital dialog with a “drop box” of sort that allows for involvement by those who are not able to attend said meetings.

Q: 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?

A: I am reminded of the adage, “Professionalism dictates decorum.” The more open we are to the public, in terms of discussions, votes, and deliberations, the better, as we are required to maintain sunshine laws, thus monthly meetings might work.

4. Q: 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.

A: To me, anything that involves increased technological access, especially for those constituents who are not able to attend said meetings, would surely benefit township officials as well as the general public because elected officials are able to receive more feedback on any number of issues facing Bedford Township. I am also reminded of what my grandmother used to say, "The more the merrier." How can an official make a decision unless there is ample feedback. I suppose any way feedback and openness can be obtained will surely help.

5. Q: What is your position concerning having all board members being fully informed before decisions are made at Township Board Meetings?

A: Knowledge is the essential component in any decision making process, helping leaders to make informed decisions after considering new ideas and experiences. I want to make a difference, change our little corner of the world, be inspired and be inspiring. If I learned one thing from teaching and being a Boy Scout Leader, it is to Be Prepared! I will always be informed and prepared.

Q: Do you think that there is enough discussion on issues by all board members when decisions are made currently?

A: To me, the mainstay of a partnership government involves discussion by informed township officials. This includes increasing opportunities for professional, courteous, and open discussions. If elected, I will do my homework, be truly informed and thus more engaged in discussions, after all, it is my duty—something not to be taken lightly.

6. Q: There may be some tough future decisions concerning cuts to current employee and trustee benefits. Are you willing to make these cuts if necessary?

A: In the current U.S. culture, it seems that cutting peoples wages and benefits is the norm, and believe me, I know, as I am a retired teacher from Bedford. However, I feel that if we "Step over a dollar to pick up a dime", we might lose our talented employees to other places. If we lose our full time personnel, change over to a part time working relationship, or not pay commensurate wages, our Bedford Township family employees might not be as invested in our township, might not take ownership of their respective duties, or might not be able to effectively complete their daily routines/.tasks. Indeed, we might even risk losing our investment in the trained people, those who work hard to make this township a functioning entity. We need to "pay the freight" so to speak for talent. If we do not, the day-to-day monitoring of annual operations, i.e. budgets, voter registration, processing of U.S. passports, sewer, water and public road maintenance programs, processing all tax bills and payments, assessments of property values, issuing building permits, and follow-up inspections would surely suffer without dedicated officials. To me, full time employment with competitive wages, opportunities for advancements, along with reasonable benefits, will work to keep our talent, our public servants here in Bedford. Once again, instead of cutting people and outsourcing the talent, I suggest that we look for other outside funding resources, like grants, co-ops between local townships and counties, state resources as well as federal other types of established federal programs, as a means to increase funds. We need to keep and retain the capable individuals who run the day-to-day operations as they not only have the talent, but also the hands-on experiences, the education, necessary professional development, educable experiences, along with the positive work ethic that allows for continuation and maintenance of property and services. As an aside, we could begin to work to reassess outdated expenditures or review all expenses as the law requires a balanced budget and therefore, the need for effective budgeting practices is a necessity.

7. Q: 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?

A: To me, reasonable individual time limits helps to keep the political process fair as others might have additional views or other issues or concerns that need to be presented.

According to https://www.michigan.gov/documents/ag/OMA_handbook_287134_7.pdf (page 13),

It reads: "Limiting public comment – a public body may adopt a rule imposing individual time limits for members of the public addressing the public body. (69) In order to carry out its responsibilities, the board can also consider establishing rules allowing the chairperson to encourage groups to designate one or more individuals to speak on their behalf to

avoid cumulative comments. But a rule limiting the period of public comment may not be applied in a manner that denies a person the right to address the public body, such as by limiting all public comment to a half-hour period. (70).”

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

A: As an adjunct weekend professor of state and local government and Michigan history courses at Spring Arbor University, I taught all aspects of the local issues, legal workings, and funding of local governments. I have been involved in dialogs between some employees who work at the township and many voters as I work to become more aware and engaged in many of the issues facing Bedford Township. I also taught a graduate level grant writing course, have written grants in the past, which will hopefully work to prevent cuts; instead, I feel that we could, we need to add monies to our township. I have a working list of potential grants and hope to start day one if elected—this way, we can work to make improve services and meet designated obligations.

Q: What do you see is your role as a member the Bedford Township Board?

A: As an old school Democrat, I sincerely believe that township leaders should ramp up our required elected duties and responsibilities by being actively engaged in the daily workings our great township and beyond. Indeed, as a Bedford Township Trustee, I want to work to build bridges with Bedford Township, the Bedford Public Schools, local and national businesses, and local social programs. I want to create grant-funding resource programs, socio-economic development opportunities working to foment a revolution of social participation. In short, I feel that community members need leaders who work to give back to the people Bedford Township.

If elected, I will continue with such program as I believe township leaders should participate in or create local events that help people, (like I did as a teacher). For example, a colleague, Mr. Jim Lopinski and I started the “Camp Out to Stamp Out Hunger” working with the BJHS Student Council to increase social awareness and fuel a revolution of social change and thinking on how we can make a difference in our community. We collected over 1,100 items during the First “Camp Out to Stamp Out Hunger” (2014), and more than 1,700 items were collected on the second camp out, last November (2015). We wanted the event to inspire a social revolution, in the likes of President Kennedy, and by doing so; many kids were given an opportunity to make a difference. We even had a camel from the he Indian Creek Zoo and a hayride from local farmer from Douglas Rd. The delivery of goods involved the Bedford Township Lions Club, who also worked to amp up community involvement, and thus help forty-one recipient families.

As a publications teacher, I also offered a reduced price of our yearbook if students brought in new and gently used toys. We collected over 300 toys, which were given to the Old Newsboys and the Ronald McDonald House.

I worked with teens to write, produce, and direct a Random Film Festival at BJHS raising over \$600.00 dollars for the 100% Handicapped Playground at Douglas Rd. Elementary School.

Finally, I want to continue working to help the community in other creative ways.

Q: Do you think that all board members should take the responsibility for placing topics on the meeting agenda?

A: Of course, if there is a need, then the need must be expressed and what better place than the local township meeting hall?

9. Q: How many Bedford Township Board meetings have you attended in the past year?

A: I stopped going to meetings when the township authorized the change of a local piece of farmland to a mobile/modular home park without consideration or consent of the public. The change was thwarted. I did attend a few special meetings that involved increasing ambulance services and other programs.

Q: How many times have you watched the videos of Bedford Township Board meetings during the past year?

A: I am viewing several of these lately.

Q: After attending or viewing past meetings, do you have any recommendations to improve the efficiency and decorum at future meetings.

A: It is hoped that all involved work to maintain a sense of professionalism as part of the process.

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

A: As noted, I am a strong advocate of constituent controlled business growth and housing development as per approval that works with the public's holistic vision in mind. Bedford will continue to remain the Jewel of Michigan, as we continue to thrive as vibrant family community with the advantages of small town city life.

I feel we need to work to build bridges between the local government and the schools, along with homeowners, local builders and businesses with increase job opportunities. There also exists the idea that there needs to be better communication on issues like controlled suburban residential growth, keeping neighborhood businesses vibrant and alive, agricultural preservation: "keep the green that attracts us". I feel that we need to continue local senior assistance, fire and safety improvements, teenage drug prevention, library, recreation and other open play space for kids and adults, and also support for local charities—including the car show at BHS.

I would work to attract younger families to Bedford Township by advertising via media commercials, newspaper ads, and word of mouth—raising awareness of the positive experience that is life while living in Bedford Township.

This includes the following:

- *The impressive school system with high M-Step scores, sports, clubs as well as technological growth.
- *Local pick your own orchards, farmer's market, veggie stands,
- *Carr Park playground and community center
- *White Park baseball diamonds, tennis courts, walking trails and playground area
- *Parmelee skateboard park, Frisbee golf, and the playground,
- *Indian Creek playground, softball, and baseball diamonds, hiking/walking trails,
- *Samaria playground, park, shelter, and horseshoe pits,
- Ansted Park: phase one walking trails (and three benches paid for by donations and spearheaded by a local Eagle Scout).
- *100% handicapped accessible playground at DRE
- *The local YMCA experience and several pools in the area
- *The numerous excellent varsity and youth sports programs at BPS (I know I coached two sports at BHS).
- *BPS concert series and even the fireworks display.

Next, I am thinking that we need to have a digital dropbox that is designed to easily allow our family community constituents to express their concerns on any number of issues.

We also need to be what some call "shovel ready" but I refer to a more "Bedford Township ready" with an infrastructure designed to meet the challenges of potential growth related to the Gordy Howe Bridge.

Finally, I cannot underscore the importance of working to write grants that help support the various programs offered in Bedford Township.

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

A: As I will do more than what is expected, (like I did as a public school educator and professor of state and local government), accountability will not be an issue. However, to answer the question, I suggest emails, open meetings, and other forms of communication feedback (including a digital drop-box) will help to increase accountability.