

Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce 2020 Local officials' candidate Questionnaire

Brenda M. Moore Responses:

Candidate for re-election; Drain Commissioner; a countywide post

1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?

I was appointed to the Drain Commissioner's post in 2013 and have had 2 primary and 2 general elections since. I am seeking a second 4-year term.

2. Have you ever owned a business or has someone in your family owned a business? If yes, please describe.

I was part owner of Clay Avenue Cellars after moving the historic gas station on Laketon and Henry and making it into a winery. Honestly, the partners and I were not well suited to operate a business together, nor did we have the capital leverage to grow the business properly. My hat is off to any small business that can make things work now days. So much attention is given to landing "big employers" I feel sometimes the leadership of the greater community forgets about the importance of supporting small businesses.

3. Briefly describe the qualifications and experience you possess that make you the best candidate for this office.

Much of what Drain Commissioner's do while working on open county drains is in the natural environment. An understanding of environmental laws, drain law, soil erosion control, and best management practices for stream and water quality protection is essential. I hold a Bachelor of Science from GVSU and a Master of Science from MSU in Natural Resource Management curriculums. I have 36 years of experience as a governmental staffer or consultant. I have worked with city, township and county government in my career and have many contacts in state government.

4. What do you believe should be the role of government in today's world?

Government has traditionally provided services to the public that the private sector cannot. Government must look at a broader range of human needs for service than the private sector does. Although government and non-profit organizations are not profit driven, we must still use and leverage public resources for the greatest benefit. The challenge now is the use of creative problem solving and collaboration to stretch our resources.

5. What do you consider the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and how can the county government address them?

- The fallout of COVID shutdowns is of great concern, as are consumer's reaction to reopening society. Businesses and government alike will need to make adjustments to how we do business and serve people considering this episode has changed our world as we know it—there will likely also be other similar challenges in the future.
- I am very concerned about the disparity of opportunities for youth without adequate life skill preparation. Many youth, be them white or brown-skinned, lack parenting and training that promotes the self-assurance and self-discipline needed to face life challenges and keep good jobs. These ill-prepared youth often have ill-prepared children. This is a socio-economic issue that we need to aggressively address together.

- Access to skill and capital for small businesses. There seems to be a disconnect between many local, state and federal programs and what businesses really need. I feel strongly that factions of county government need to focus on keeping their “house” in order—efficient and responsive. That will help everyone we serve, including business. When we get too far flung from our mission I believe resources are spread too thin and nothing gets done well.

6. Name one thing that you think is going right in Muskegon County and one thing that you think could be changed right away.

- I love the physical changes I see in my home City of Muskegon. Leaders are looking at quality of life issues and considering such things as community beautification, better access to our waterfront, non-motorized transportation, etc. These additional considerations make a community more desirable to residents and businesses.
- I see leadership at many levels and in many communities being more concerned about not “rocking the boat” and keeping themselves or their positions safe rather than stepping up to take bold moves to change our community for the better. We also need to look beyond our municipal boundaries to keep the greater community healthy and efficient.

7. In what areas do you feel you can make the most difference as a local elected official?

- I have never been afraid to ask “*why are we doing this and can we do better?*” and “*does it best serve the greater good?*” This has caused me grief; but I believe it has also brought some positive change to the greater Muskegon community.

8. How will you leverage and utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce as a resource should you be elected?

I don’t currently see opportunities to work with the Chamber considering the nature of my work and past dealings with their staff, but I am open-minded to the possibilities.

9. If elected, what are your top three (3) priorities?

- Institute fair and consistent polices (there were none documented when I took office).
- Continue updating and organizing records, they were in rough shape as well. You cannot serve anyone well if you cannot trace the legal and historic thread of previous actions.
- Be responsive, creative and reasonable in dealing with drainage improvements and repairs throughout the county.

10. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Because of my training and experience, I am uniquely suited for the Drain Commissioner’s position. Most people do not realize the impact that drain projects have had, and continue to have, on natural systems and surface water quality. Surface water is so important to quality of life and our economy in Muskegon County! We must protect it. For more information about my office, and examples of work completed under my supervision see:

<https://www.co.muskegon.mi.us/492/Drain-Commissioner>.

Thank you for allowing elected officials to make contact with your membership!