

Name: Michael Poulin
Office Sought: Muskegon County Sheriff
Website: <http://www.michaelpoulinforsheriff.com/>

Phone: 231-206-5808
Party: Democratic
Email: poulinforsheriff@gmail.com

**1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?
If yes, which office?**

Re-Elected, Muskegon County Sheriff, 2020
Elected, Muskegon County Sheriff, 2016
Re-Elected, North Muskegon Board of Education, 2014 (President)
Re-Elected, North Muskegon Board of Education, 2010 (President)
Re-Elected, North Muskegon Board of Education, 2006 (President)
Elected, North Muskegon Board of Education, 2002

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

My wife Susan Sanborn-Poulin is a 3rd generation jeweler and owner of Sanborn's Jewelers, located at 821 W. Broadway Ave, Muskegon MI 49441. Sanborn's Jewelers has been established in Muskegon County for over 70 years. In 2019, Sanborn's Jewelers received a Retail Excellence Award from the Muskegon Chamber of Commerce.

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

I have been a Muskegon County resident for over 45 years. As your Sheriff I have demonstrated my ability to successfully manage all aspects of the Sheriff's Office, including implementing policy; selection, managing and training staff; developing and managing departmental budgets and leading cross-functional units. In 2019, I was appointed by Governor Whitmer to serve on the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission, where I am serving my second term. During my time as Sheriff I have been selected as a member to the State of Michigan, School Safety Grant Committee and the Michigan Motorcycle Safety Action Team. Since 2021, I have served on the Michigan Sheriff's Association Board of Directors, serving as the District III, Chair.

This August I will start my 38th year as a professional law enforcement officer, having worked my entire career in Muskegon County. During my tenure with the Sheriff's Office I have had the opportunity to supervise every division of the agency, to include 15 years' experience as Grant Coordinator and 12 years as the SWAT Team Commander.

I am a graduate of Grand Valley State University, where I earned a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. In 2004, I graduated from the Northwestern University Center for

Public Safety; Police Staff and Command and Executive Management Program, where I earned the "Public Safety Executive Leadership Award" from Northwestern University. In 2012, I graduated from the FBI National Academy, Quantico VA.

In 2012, I represented Muskegon County by participating with the United Nations Development Program and the State of Kuwait, in support of implementing a "National and Integrated Traffic and Transportation Strategy". In doing so, I was helpful in building designated crash investigation units as well as assisting in the establishment of Kuwait's National Traffic Safety Guidelines. In November of 2018, I travelled to Doha, Qatar and presented at an International Traffic Safety Conference, assisting that country with preparations for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Soccer Tournament.

I believe that my extensive years of law enforcement service, and being the only candidate seeking this position that is licensed as law enforcement officer by the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES), places me in the best position to continue serve as your Sheriff.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

Your Sheriff is responsible for law enforcement functions on a county level, ensuring that all local, state and federal laws are followed. While my role encompasses all aspects of law enforcement to include corrections, courts, and civil process, each of these functions must include community engagement, collaboration and partnerships. My primary role is to be a community partner, ensuring that my work is done to secure public safety and promote our community.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

Violent crime is always an issue that affects local business. A small business can be impacted to a point that they are unable to recover from the financial loss, ultimately leading to the closure of the business. As your Sheriff I will continue to work with all law enforcement partners and community organizations in an effort to support our community's county wide. Over the past few years I have provided overtime dollars to help address gun violence issues in Muskegon County, by placing additional patrols outside of the Sheriff's general operating area.

Another issue I would consider is the retention of staffing. I have personally experienced the weakness related to the workforce, including talent and work ethic. We have bolstered our recruiting at the Sheriff's Office, doing everything we can to promote Muskegon County as a wonderful place to live and work.

Homelessness has become a growing issue in Muskegon County, creating a variety of underlying economic and social factors that affect our community in many different ways. Homelessness can cause strain and financial hardship on our community, causing significant costs that can add up. This impact includes emergency department visits and hospitalizations, law enforcement intervention and incarceration, along with mental

health resources. Homelessness affects local communities due to the struggles between businesses and homeless people and related public policy issues faced by local governments and police departments. Law enforcement must partner with local businesses to ensure that information is being shared on issues and strategies to address this issue.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?

Problem solving public issues can be achieved when our communities we serve believe us to be effective and when our officers and agencies operate at the highest standards of professional conduct. I personally believe that there is no other law enforcement entity or law enforcement position that is more trusted, more imbedded, or has built a relationship with a community then that of the Office of Sheriff. By being open and transparent about my values and beliefs, while engaging and understanding current issues and how they may affect individual groups in our community allows me to better communicate and problem solve local issues.

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

I believe that my personal community engagement outside of the Office of Sheriff, helps me connect and build relationships with persons that the position of Sheriff would not normally have. It is with these personal connections, I am most affective in making a difference.

- Muskegon County Veterans Treatment Court, Member
- Muskegon County Social Justice Commission, Member
- North Muskegon Board of Education (2002-2017)
- Child Abuse Council, Board of Directors
- Pioneer Resources, Board of Directors (2015-2024)
- Muskegon Community Health Project, Board of Directors
- Muskegon Area Medication Disposal Program, Chair
- Muskegon County Alcohol Liability Initiative, Past Chair
- Lakeshore Traffic Safety Committee, Past Chair
- Fraternal Order of Police #99, Past Executive Trustee
- Muskegon Rotary Club, Member

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

Our law enforcement community must create relationships with business owners. These relationships are important in maintaining the safety and security of the business community. This can be achieved by Law enforcements participation with the Chamber in providing training programs to local businesses on how to protect themselves from criminal activity. Through positive communication and understanding, law enforcement can create opportunities to reduce crime.

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

During my first term as Sheriff I had outlined 7 priorities. Those priorities included;

- Bring Integrity and Accountability back to the Office of Sheriff.
- Ensure the safety of our community, as well as those in the public safety sector.
- Repair public safety relationships with area police and fire municipalities.
- See that all Command Staff are qualified for work assignments.
- Complete the County wide Safe Schools Initiative.
- Repair working relations with all labor units.
- To work within the operating budget, and eliminate wasteful spending while capturing new funding sources.

I am proud to announce that not only did we hit each of these priorities, we are still maintaining them today.

During this next term I plan to continue supporting these priorities, while also seeing that staff numbers are brought to an acceptable level within the jail. Other priorities include the completion of the (1.8m) Jail Mezzanine Project, increase in local law enforcement contracts with area townships, and State Accreditation for our jail.

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

During my first two terms as Sheriff, staff numbers have improved for both the Law Enforcement and the Corrections Division. It will always be our goal to see that our community is served professionally, with a focus on community needs and customer service. Even with an increase (23.06%) of calls for service handled by deputies and investigators of the Muskegon County Sheriff's Office, we were able to directly impact our community in a positive way.

113.43% reduction in residential breaking and entering complaints

81.75% reduction in larcenies

87.45% increase in residential property checks

9.07% reduction in Aggravated/Felonious Assaults

Investigators continue to increase solve-ability rates, which speaks volumes of the professional work and direct focus of assisting our community and obtaining results for the victims of crime.

Send completed questionnaires to:
Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce
Attn: Rachel Gorman
Email: rgorman@muskegon.org
380 West Western Avenue, Suite 202
Muskegon, MI 49440
Questions: 231-722-3751

Muskegon County Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce candidate Questionnaire

Name; LtC (Ret) Max Riekse;
Office Sought: Muskegon County Sheriff
Phone: 231 2888881
Party: Republican
No Website

1. Yes; Elected twice to the Fruitport Township Parks Commission.
2. Yes; Sold belt buckles and other 'stuff' in over 45 states and around 4-5 counties; and made good money doing it; and it was fun. My father was a highly successful coin dealer for many years.
3. Retired Lt Colonel U.S Army; 32 years; and retired Michigan Public School Teacher 23 years. K-12 Teaching Certificate; Two Masters Degrees from Western Michigan University.
4. The County Sheriff has two main responsibilities; Run the Jail; and county road patrols.
5. Jobs; Muskegon County needs good paying jobs with good health Insurance and good pension plans; That will greatly help to keep crime down.
6. First; I'm not a democrat. Second; I'm a strong President Trump supporter; I love the guy. Third; I will work to remove any and all illegal aliens in Muskegon County.
7. By being elected Muskegon County Sheriff; for one, watch over all electric power transformers in the out county area with Sheriff road patrol. If these are taken out, the economy of Muskegon County will collapse. Also task Sherriff road patrols to oversee and look after electric power towers and natural gas terminals in Muskegon County.
8. Work with local city and township police departments to help keep Muskegon County safe. If we keep crime down and people are safe, business will thrive and people will prosper.
9. Run the Muskegon County Jail; Have a strong county sheriff out county road patrol. And work with the upcoming President Trump administration in rounding up illegals; Jail them; and help deport them which will help make America Great Again. Trump was great for business and our economy which in turn was great for the American People.
10. We need to start to prepare with a war with Communist China; and that includes right here in Muskegon County. I Intend to be a Constitutional Law Sheriff.

Thanks
Max
Riekse

If you have any
questions, please
give me a call.

Name: Andy O'Riley

Phone: 231-343-7755

Office Sought: County Commission Dist 2

Party: Dem

Website: andyoriley.com

Email: andy@andyoriley.com

1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?
If yes, which office? Roosevelt Park Mayor Pro Tem
2. Have you ever owned a business or has someone in your family owned a business? If yes, please describe. I am the owner of O'Riley Media Group.
3. Briefly describe the qualifications and experience you possess that make you the best candidate for this office. I have been fortunate to have learned first-hand from people in every part of Muskegon County that our greatest missing link is our communications. I have 30 years plus of experience in speaking to people and learning from them and earning their trust in what I hope is an even and level basis.
4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking? I think the County Commission is there to serve the people and employees of the county. To make sure that the adequate funding is there for safety, infrastructure and operations is essential and to lead by example so other local municipalities can see that working together can be much more beneficial.
5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them? The top three issues to me are recruitment,

retention and development of staff. How can I address them? First by example. We pay our people an advanced wage for what they do and see the benefit of employees that feel appreciated. Next, to continue to build this community so it's attractive to those looking to build a business or buy a home. We've come a long way, but we still have a long way to go. Development of staff can continue with the educational opportunities presented in the county with Muskegon Community College and even work it's way into the secondary schools to help learners develop the talents and tools needed for today.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues? I was born with a conscience and I stand by what I do and say. I am careful to learn what I feel I need to before I pass a judgement on anything as a rule and I also understand the mentality of people here in Muskegon when it comes to their feeling of what's been "Taken away". I sometimes feel that I am looking down the road maybe 15 years more than some and it's not always the easiest to explain, but to try and think things through to the end where others might not is where I believe my strength lies.

7. In what areas do you feel you can make the most difference as a local elected official? Improving our local connection. Our rural communities are seeing the substantial growth in the city, there's so little relevant local news to keep everyone up to speed. To some, it seems like all the attention is going in one direction when the reality is, there's plenty for everyone, and the county can offer more to rural municipalities, but we need to get the channels back open to help facilitate that. By no means is it a "coming to the rescue" mindset, but more of a "help is here if you need it, and yes...it can come closer to you to help you get it."

8. How will you leverage and utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce as a resource should you be elected? I will have to learn how the MLCC can help me in this capacity

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

1) To improve emergency communications and preparation in the county. Believe what you will about the pandemic, however it proved that we are desperately lacking in ways to communicate to our people if there's something that needs to be heeded where they can turn to for information.

2) To help reunify a county that's been stripped of it's connection due to lack of media. I publish all I can. I work 7 days a week right now, but it's not enough. To have had others try and instill fear into District 2 by suggesting they secede into a neighboring county proves the fragility of how we see ourselves.

3) Continued intelligent growth. As we are on the rise, it's essential to find ways to include the rural municipalities while respecting the AG land and livelihood of our farming community. Where can we find places to help grow the population in ways that will allow for a better tax base for the smaller communities and help ease the cost placed on their services? Where can we find ways to help the AG community benefit from green technology and reduce the costs they have to operate?

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

Our disconnect seems so personal. The reality is, we all feel it. Urban or rural everyone is asking "What about us?" There was a time that there was enough information out there that you knew when something great happened in Ravenna, it made the paper. Or when something bad happened, you heard about that too. Now.....it's a feeling of every community for itself and it's a river we have to swim up together. We're not going to get back to the "Good old Days" however, a bold future is in front of us and the shifting of the sands of time is showing Muskegon County as the dominant place on the lakeshore for the next 50 years. To assure that all of the county is included on that, is my key goal.

Send completed questionnaires to:
Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce
Attn: Rachel Gorman
Email: rgorman@muskegon.org
380 West Western Avenue, Suite 202
Muskegon, MI 49440

Questions: 231-722-3751

Name: Sandra Boone-Thomas
Office Sought: County Commission District 3
Website:

Phone: 231-578-6882
Party: Democratic
Email: seboone09@gmail.com

1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?
If yes, which office?

No

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

My grandparents owned an eating establishment called the Doo Drop Inn in Sapulpa, Oklahoma.

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

I taught in the Muskegon Public Schools for 32 years and have a BA and MA from Western Michigan University. I have been active in the Muskegon County community as a foster parent, Big Brothers/Big Sisters participant and spent 2 years on the City of Muskegon Review Board. I also was the telecommunications supervisor at Hackley Hospital for 10 years.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

Good stewardship of the multimillion-dollar county budget and enhancing the lives of all the people living in Muskegon County while representing the special needs and interests of my district.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

Housing – Rising rental and home prices are affecting employers' ability to find a stable workforce.

Transportation – Employers would benefit from more widespread and affordable public transportation to ensure their employees can get to work.

Technology – Public services need to be available to all by addressing the technology gap.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?

I prioritize issues based on their importance to the community and practicality of solutions.

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

Affordable housing and improved access to county services by addressing the technology gap for seniors and others.

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

When I need input from local business people, the Chamber of Commerce will be my first resource.

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

See question 5.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to interact with the business community. I look forward to any questions you have for me.

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Questions: 231-722-3751

2024 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: Michelle Hazekamp
Office Sought: County Commissioner
Website: HazekampForMuskegon.com

Phone: 231-670-7633
Party: Republican
Email: hazekampformuskegon@gmail.com

1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?
If yes, which office?

Yes. I am currently a Muskegon County Commissioner for district 3; Fruitport, Sullivan Twp. & Norton Shores.

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

My husband and I currently own Lakes, Inc., a small trucking company here in Muskegon County. We have owned this company for almost 21 years and transport refrigerated products.

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

The qualifications I hold that make me the best candidate for this office is primarily the 20 years of successfully operating my company, which consists of the everyday duties of accounting, human resources, maintaining compliance with state and federal regulations, and problem solving. I have also had some community service & leadership experience with my time serving as a Boy Scout leader.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

The role of County Commissioner is to approve, maintain and keep county departments within budget. As a current County Commissioner, it is necessary to make conservative decisions when spending our tax payer dollars between necessities and opportunities that arise that may help improve and increase the financials of Muskegon County, or not.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

The top 3 issues I believe that face Muskegon County businesses today are:

1. Retaining Employees.
2. Taxes.
3. Wages.

Retaining employees is a huge issue for businesses, which the state of our current economy greatly factors into. Although record high inflation and increased tax rates are affecting everyone, many of our businesses in Muskegon County cannot afford to pay a livable wage and/or health benefits, therefore businesses tend to experience large turn-over rates with their employees. We also have a lack of businesses capable of providing desirable salaries. Many of our Muskegon County residents work in surrounding counties where higher salaries are available. Muskegon County is a unique county for many reasons, including our lakeshore, landscape, resources, ecology and environment which allows for a variety of business opportunities that are not best suited for inland counties. As a County Commissioner, these issues can be addressed by working with businesses and developers through tax incentives, available infrastructure and utilizing our county land bank to bring in new and innovative businesses that can offer the wages necessary and appeal to our residents, while at the same time trying to help struggling businesses with available resources.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?

My personal values and beliefs play a large role in problem solving, and is why I was elected. I do not sway from my values and beliefs, but do listen to and consider both sides of a problem with an open mind and try to come up with a satisfactory solution for most, as long as it is lawful, moral and reasonable. Public input is also very important to me in determining a balance of personal values and beliefs.

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

First of all, I feel I can and do make a difference when helping out constituents with problems, even when it is not under county control or authority. I do my best to find answers and solutions for constituents when they reach out to me. Responding to our constituents' needs is a priority.

For Muskegon County as a whole, I feel I can make the most difference as a County Commissioner by controlling wasteful spending, and aid in acquiring new economic development opportunities to help Muskegon County grow financially and make Muskegon a place where people want to work, live and visit.

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

If re-elected, I will utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce as a resource by directing existing and future businesses as a go-to for concerns, needs, opportunities and information for problem solving and to make their businesses successful. I am committed to work alongside in any matter if necessary to help accomplish results, as I am committed to the success of Muskegon County.

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

If re-elected, my top 3 priorities are:

1. Control wasteful spending
2. Serving the constituents of Muskegon County in any way I am able.
3. Help facilitate Economic & Affordable Housing development

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

I love Muskegon County and the people who live here. We are an amazing community! I am excited to be a part of helping Muskegon move forward to be a better place for our future generations to work and live.

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Name: Chris McGuigan
Office Sought: Musk. Cnty. Commission Dist. 4
Website: electchrismcguigan.com
chrismcguigan18@me.com

Phone: 231-286-7298
Party: Dem
Email:

1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office? No
If yes, which office?

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

Yes, I was a Partner in a Muskegon law firm until I became employed at the Community Foundation as its CEO in 1999. My husband is also a long time part owner of McCroskey Law firm.

3. Briefly describe the qualifications and experience you possess that make you the best candidate for this office. 17 years working as a lawyer representing the largest businesses in Muskegon in commercial and employment related deals. Throughout my legal career I was very active in leading civic and non-profit organizations whose work was/is important in the life of our County, including the Muskegon Bar. Assn., Hackley Community Care Center, First Congregational Church and Planned Parenthood of Muskegon. Then, as the head of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County, I gained deep knowledge of every part of our County, geographically, demographically, economically, and culturally. My job required responsibility for oversight and management of hundreds of millions of dollars in philanthropic endowed and non-endowed funds. And, as the leader of Muskegon's largest philanthropy and the institution looked to for leadership in addressing community-wide issues, I have significant experience in executing projects and addressing issues that affect the quality of life throughout our County.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

To assure our efficient and effective execution of our County government responsibilities, especially fiscal management. So, a primary role of a County Commissioner is to assure we hire and support a great county administrator, make decisions on the proper allocation of resources that maximize beneficial impact for our citizens and our County. I believe a County Commissioner should provide County staff with encouragement and inspiration to stretch; to work to create ever increasing economic opportunities and quality of life for everyone in our

County. I believe the Commission should lead, together, to maximize the County's assets toward creating a more hopeful and enjoyable everyday life, especially for our children and their parents.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

1. Attracting and retaining talent that can innovate and implement technological improvements; 2. Hiring enough qualified staff to meet demand; 3. Affordability and availability of housing, childcare, and transportation in Muskegon for service industry workers. I will work to assure the assets the County owns which impact all of these issues are managed and expanded to make Muskegon an ever more attractive place for a vibrant talented workforce to pursue their careers and enjoy their lives, make it easier for employees to get to work, find affordable conveniently located housing, and make interacting with the regulatory functions of the County clear, prompt and smooth. Beyond managing our own resources to impact these issues positively, there is much the County can do if it chooses to lead and collaborate with other municipalities and community institutions to pursue and achieve focused County-wide goals of increasing training resources, expanding workforce readiness programs, repairing and improving our infrastructure, upgrading existing housing stock and bringing more online. Let's be creative, bold, and willing to do things differently to achieve the highest vision we have for ourselves.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues? I know my life is better when my neighbor's life is good. And my neighbor, from the perspective of a County Commissioner post, is all of Muskegon County. I am confident my personal beliefs and values are aligned with the beliefs, values, decisions and actions that can achieve solutions and improvements the community desires. I know also working across parties, or any form of line, toward a common goal is HARD. I am committed to NOT getting angry, staying in it, keeping a sense of humor and a feeling of absolute respect for everyone working with me toward a solution and improvement..

7. In what areas do you feel you can make the most difference as a local elected official? I think I can make the most difference in these areas: 1) increasing County's focus on strategic goals set with the input of many leaders; 2) efforts to increase a sense across County governmental departments and functions that we are all pulling on the same oars, moving the County forward together; and 3) hopefully, increasing the County's vision for itself as a leader with the seven cities in establishing a way to work more effectively together toward a stronger more prosperous County.

8. How will you leverage and utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce as a resource should you be elected? Its important the County Commission and our County Administrator view the Chamber as a key community partner. Participation in Chamber events, on Chamber Committees, and communicating informally and regularly between County leaders and Chamber leaders would benefit both entities and the community. In particular, I would like to see the County join the City of Muskegon and the Chamber in the work to lift up,

fill in, beautify and increase the development of our County's historic and economically critical downtown.

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

Maximizing access and enjoyability of the County's parks, improving the quality and usefulness of our public transportation system, including air service, and support of mental health and public health services to assure Muskegon County's citizens have the care they need. In addressing these needs, other critical issues of educational attainment, affordable housing, and meaningful employment are also impacted.

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share? No, I need to go to sleep!

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Questions: 231-722-3751

Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce

Dan Potts
Muskegon County Commissioner – District 4
www.votedanpotts.com
231-206-5157
Danpotts286@gmail.com

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN APPOINTED OR ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE?

YES – appointed to Mona Shores School Board in 2007 and re-elected in 2010. Resigned position in 2013 to Coach in the district.

HAVE YOU EVER OWNED A BUSINESS OR HAS SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY OWNED A BUSINESS?

YES.- I have operated my own medical sales representative business for 30 years. I was also a partner in two other businesses. Medical Supplies Distribution, Zip Medical Supplies, for 5 years until selling out to partners. Home Health Care, First Light Home Medical, for 4 years until selling out to partners. My roles were all varied, from being the managing partner, to having more of a consulting role.

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE YOU POSSESS THAT MAKE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS OFFICE.

I am a lifelong resident of Muskegon, the community has given to me and I am willing to give back. I have good mind for assessing challenges/problems and experience in being part of a board. I understand fiscal responsibility and have proven that ability by running several successful businesses. I was a high school volleyball coach and will implement some of the same strategies that made the program so successful. I also have many contacts and a good reputation in the community and have a good reputation amongst my peers.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE YOU ARE SEEKING?

I see the role of County Commissioner is to oversee the budget and implement policies. We have competent people in place that have a job to do and I expect them to do it. I would be a part of a board that reviews, questions, supports or may request alternatives for the good of Muskegon County, the businesses that operate here and its residents.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE TOP THREE (3) ISSUES FACING MUSKEGON COUNTY BUSINESSES TODAY, AND IF ELECTED , HOW CAN YOU ADDRESS THEM?

1. An educated work force that has the academic ability to learn new technology. We have many great people, just not enough. Muskegon has an adult population where 1 in 5 adults are functionally illiterate. To address, raise awareness of the issue in the

county and promote awareness of organizations like, Read Muskegon, that works with adults to improve reading and English as second language.

2. Affordable housing limits the movement of workers and re-location to Muskegon. To address, continue to support programs that I recall seeing that are trying to provide more options.
3. There seems to be some very slow approvals at state level for projects in Muskegon, for a variety of different reasons. To address, I would try to work with our elected state representatives and senators to ease in an effort to ease these burdens.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE PERSONAL VALUES AND BELIEFS FOR PROBLEM SOLVING FOR THE PUBLICS ISSUES?

I am running to be a representative of and serve the people. I don't have any investments in Muskegon County that would be considered a conflict of interest. I only have a desire to see our town thrive, and be a great place to work or own a business, raise a family, and enjoy our shoreline, parks, and recreational options.

IN WHAT AREAS DO YOU FEEL YOU CAN MAKE THE MOST DIFFERENCE AS A LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL?

I know that I am a good listener and know that there are many issues/opportunities that I am not well-versed in. This approach can allow for innovations and ideas to be presented and potentially acted upon if they make good sense for the community.

HOW WILL YOU LEVERAGE AND UTILIZE THE MUSKEGON LAKESHORE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AS A RESOUCE SHOULD YOU BE ELECTED?

There is a tremendous amount of experienced business minds in this town and at the Chamber. I love to listen to their ideas on opportunities, troubleshooting, solutions, and long-term planning.

IF ELECTED, WHAT ARE YOUR TOP 3 PRIORITIES?

1. Maintain a higher level of fiscal responsibility and scrutinize spending to try and maximize investment.
2. Review the long term/short terms plans for downtown development
3. Raise awareness of the labor pool challenges and try to improve

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

Please let me know if you would like to have further conversations.

Name: Jessica Cook

Phone: 231-282-9051

Office Sought: Muskegon County Commissioner, District 6

Party: Democrat

Website: www.electjessicacook.com

Email: electjessicacook@gmail.com

**1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?
If yes, which office?**

I have held my current office of Muskegon County Commissioner, District 6 since January, 2023.

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

I have been in business for myself as a private contractor several times over my career and both of my parents have owned their own businesses, but I have not owned a business.

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

My extensive knowledge of Muskegon County institutions, businesses/employers, municipalities, neighborhoods, and initiatives makes me the best candidate for this office.

I started my professional career working for the Muskegon County Convention and Visitors Bureau, where I helped launch the Muskegon Mainstreet Program and worked to drive tourism and economic development in the area. I spent many years working in homeownership and community development in Muskegon County at Neighborhood Investment Corporation, where I eventually served as Assistant Director. I've worked in philanthropic and nonprofit operations at several regional organizations, including True North Community Services and the Muskegon Area ISD and have also gained national experience as an executive search and organizational development consultant and on the human resources team at an international philanthropic organization.

My broad experience and depth of understanding of our community gives me a unique perspective and set of skills that allowed me to hit the ground running during my first term as Muskegon County Commissioner. I developed trust and partnerships with Muskegon County staff, stakeholders, my constituents, and my fellow commissioners and am looking forward to building on this strong foundation in the years ahead.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

The role of a County Commissioner is to set policy, oversee the county administrator, and serve my constituents in issues related to county government services. In order to do this well, commissioners should have a broad understanding of all county departments and their functions as well as an understanding of how these departments interact with and impact other departments, our community, and the broader region.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

To answer this question, I can paraphrase what I have learned at community events, educational opportunities, and discussions with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, City of Muskegon, Downtown Muskegon Now, and Greater Muskegon Economic Development and other area organizations and initiatives.

1. Access to a skilled workforce - we need to continue working to train and retain skilled workers in Muskegon. I encourage and support County partnerships and participation in local initiatives and organizations working to address this issue, like Muskegon Community College, West Michigan WORKS!, the Muskegon Area ISD, union skilled training initiatives, Read Muskegon, etc.
2. Lack of affordable housing - this is a national issue with a huge impact on local businesses. The County of Muskegon has been active in partnerships studying the root and impact of housing shortages and is a strong part of the solution, with my full support. I am on the Muskegon County Land Bank board and have kept active and up to date on local and regional solutions to our housing shortage.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?

My personal values and beliefs are a strong part of who I am as a community member and as a leader. My beliefs and values guide my decision making as a county commissioner, but they don't blind me to my duties to represent my constituents. Instead, they lead me to gather impartial information, listen actively, and seek solutions that positively impact our community.

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

As an elected official, I make a difference by working to hire and retain a highly effective county administrator, setting fiscally responsible policy that allows the county to remain a strong community institution in perpetuity, and representing the best interest of my constituents. To do this, I am an active participant in community events, initiatives, partnerships, and organizations. I pursue continuing education and learning opportunities that will allow me to become a better commissioner and community leader. I stay up to date on economic, environmental, educational and political issues impacting our community and proactively seek input and guidance from a diverse set of community members, subject matter experts, and other stakeholders.

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

I rely on the Chamber of Commerce to be my connection and advisor regarding all things business in Muskegon County. I am a recent graduate of Muskegon in Focus, regularly attend chamber networking and education events, and maintain strong working relationships with staff. In my second term as County Commissioner, I'll continue to build on and leverage these partnerships and relationships to make me a well informed and effective commissioner.

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

My top three priorities for my second term include: 1 - Continuing to make sound fiscal decisions to responsibly steward tax and grant dollars in the best interest of Muskegon County. 2 - Developing and implementing an environmental sustainability plan for Muskegon County facilities. 3 - Reinvigorating DEI principals and practices in County business.

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

Thank you for this opportunity; I look forward to speaking with you next week.

Send completed questionnaires to:
Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce
Attn: Rachel Gorman
Email: rgorman@muskegon.org
380 West Western Avenue, Suite 202
Muskegon, MI 49440
Questions: 231-722-3751

Name: Doug Brown
Office Sought: County Commissioner
Website: electdougbrown.com

Phone: 231-260-1201
Party: Republican
Email: dfbrown9@comast.net

1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?
If yes, which office?

Reeths-Puffer School Board 1998-2020
Muskegon County Commissioner 2020-2022

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

Current owner of a Business located in downtown Muskegon. Grand River Office is a Commercial Office Furniture Dealership. We focus on Commercial and Educational Markets from space planning to installation.

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

Experience having worked for several years with multimillion divisions for major international companies in upper management. Having experience owning a company and being a past County Commissioner.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

Putting a Strategic Plan together with input from constituents and implementing. I believe current politicians make promises but don't keep or don't know how business works or execute a plan.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

1. Image- Continue to be a champion of Muskegon County emphasizing the positive attributes of the Lakeshore Parks and waterfront
2. Work Force training and retaining a workforce
3. Crime – corresponds with 1

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues? You need to look at both sides of the issue. My experience has helped and managing people and being on a school board.

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

Working with Business leaders and local governments having that relationship built over several years along with being involved in the community.

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

As in the past I initiated a group for input to identify needs for the County. This group is comprised of local business leaders and the Chamber. Being a Chamber of Commerce member to work with and partner on ideas and vision.

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

1. Lake front development working jointly with the City and County Master Plan and Specifically Heritage Landing.
2. For years we have Workforce living in adjoining Counties working with local business to retain workers and attract new.
3. Safety working with our law enforcement to assure we have a safe environment for business and residential development, perception is reality.

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

In addition to business experience, I have been active in several organizations that help and promote Muskegon and the County.

As County Commissioner:

Chair Strategic Planning / Community Development

Chair Transportation – Airport Air Show

Co-Chair Ways & Means

Bear Lake Water Improvement Group

DHSS - Former Foster Parents

Veterans Advisory Board

Laketon Township / RP Safe Streets Committee

North Side Lions Current VP and officer

Muskegon Rotary – Co Chair Interact

Pound Buddies – Board Member

United Way

Past School Board Member 22 years

Past President Laketon Youth / RP youth football and baseball

Featured on Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce “Catch the Wave “ 1998

Send completed questionnaires to:

Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce

Attn: Rachel Gorman

Email: rgorman@muskegon.org

380 West Western Avenue, Suite 202

Muskegon, MI 49440

Questions: 231-722-3751

Name: Will Snyder
Office Sought: State Representative, 87th District
Website: electwillsnyder.com
Phone: (231) 286-3122
Party: Democrat
Email: electwillsnyder@gmail.com

- 1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office? If yes, what office?**
 - a. In November 2022, I was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives to represent District 87, which encompasses Muskegon and the surrounding areas. As a state representative, I Chair the Appropriation Subcommittee on Labor, Economic Development, and Lifelong Learning, which oversee the budgets for two state departments, LEO and MiLEAP.
- 2. Have you ever owned a business or has someone in your family owned a business? If yes, please describe.**
 - a. No.
- 3. Briefly describe the qualifications and experience you possess that make you the best candidate for this office.**
 - a. Since 2022, I have served in the Michigan House of Representatives, representing the 87th House District, which includes approximately 92,000 residents of diverse backgrounds. In this role, I have become familiar with the needs of Muskegon residents, strengthened my advocacy skills, and gained a broad understanding of various policy and legislative processes. Before my tenure as a representative, I worked as a legislative aide and district director for my predecessor, Rep. Terry Sabo. I also served on the Board of Directors of Read Muskegon, aiming to break the generational cycle of illiteracy in Muskegon County. Additionally, serving as building association president for the local Knights of Columbus Dan M. Kennedy council allowed me to demonstrate my commitment to community service. I always prioritize the voices of Michigan residents, particularly those from Muskegon, and believe that no decision should be made without their input. My Muskegon roots and experience in Lansing enable me to advocate effectively for the hard-working citizens of West Michigan and the entire state. Strengthening connections between local communities and policymakers in Lansing is essential for reinforcing Michigan's present and investing in its future.
- 4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?**
 - a. The role of a state representative in the Michigan House is to advocate for the interests and well-being of the constituents in the 87th House District. This involves crafting, sponsoring, and voting on legislation that promotes economic growth, enhances education, ensures access to quality healthcare, and protects our environment. A state representative also provides essential constituent services, helping residents navigate state resources and address their concerns. Engaging actively with the community through town halls and forums ensures transparency and makes sure that constituents' voices are heard. Collaboration with fellow legislators, local officials, and community organizations is crucial to developing relevant policy that benefits the district and the state together. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the connections between local communities and Lansing and ensure that decisions made at the state level reflect the needs and aspirations of the residents.
- 5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?**

- a. I consider workforce development, childcare availability, and housing to be pressing issues facing Muskegon's businesses, which, in my time as representative, I have devoted a great deal of time to addressing because of the budgets that I chair. I believe that lack of access to affordable and available childcare is severely detrimental to Muskegon's businesses, and for that reason, have been working to reduce these barriers to Muskegon's families. To do so, I have advocated for and achieved increased funding for childcare and have been proud to witness Michigan's newest endeavors in expanding childcare services under the new MiLEAP Department (Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential) which both increase availability and affordability of these services. The Tri-Share program enables families to pay up to 66% less for the cost of childcare. By securing funding and advocating for effective programs in workforce development, childcare, and housing, I aim to create a thriving community where businesses can prosper, and residents can enjoy a higher quality of life.
- 6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?**
 - a. I use personal values as a sort of basis to steer my beliefs in the ways to solve public issues. However, I always make sure that these personal values aren't too strong and that they never get in the way of potential compromises or mis acknowledgment of other perspectives. I want to remain flexible and solve issues together in a bipartisan manor as often as possible.
- 7. In what areas do you feel you can make the most difference as a local elected official?**
 - a. I think the best way in my role that I can continue to make the biggest impact is by securing state resources and money for projects in the Greater Muskegon Area. Up to this point I have brought helped secure over \$100 million dollars in state money for local projects. I want to make sure and reaffirm that Muskegon gets the proper attention it deserves from Lansing.
- 8. How will you leverage and utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce a resource should you be elected?**
 - a. I will continue to leverage and utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber should I be re-elected by regularly meeting with Muskegon business owners, attending chamber sponsored events, and by producing tributes and other commemorative awards for all the businesses that are celebrating important milestones and anniversaries.
- 9. If elected what are your top 3 priorities?**
 - a. 1. Workforce/Talent Development - Creating an economy that works for everyone is priority number one for me if elected. Far too many Michiganders work too hard, many with two or three jobs, yet they are unable to get ahead living paycheck-to-paycheck only one emergency away from economic ruin. One of the most important ways to solve this is through robust and substantial investment in workforce and talent development. Creating this skilled workforce will bring high-paying and high-quality jobs to Michigan.
 - b. Restoring Revenue Sharing - The state shorted local units of government in statutory revenue sharing payments to cities, villages, townships, and counties from 2001 through 2018 to the tune of over \$8 billion. Leadership in Lansing has to be about more than just cutting funding – it has to include comprehensive economic partnerships with our counties and cities to make our state stronger. Once elected, I will work to restore and maintain revenue sharing to our local governments which will mean no cuts to essential services.

- c. Childcare Crisis – Continued support of the childcare crisis and cost of childcare. A large part of our workforce shortage is being caused by the cost of childcare. Expansion of Tri-Share and other programs is key.

2024 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: Tim Meyer Phone: 616 250-1282
 Office Sought: State Representative 88th Party: Democrat
 Website: TimMeyer.VOTE Email: Tim@TimMeyer.VOTE

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

If yes, which office?

Appointed two terms Grand Haven DDA

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

Opened Rock 'n' Road Cycle in Grand Haven 1985, Muskegon 1994, South Haven 2000, Holland 2010. Operated through 2020. South Haven is owned by a former employee, and my son owns the Grand Haven and Holland stores. We closed Muskegon in 2001.

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

I have worked with Republican county commissioners here, and our Sheriff's Dept on passing funding for road widening, programs for bicycle safety. I previously ran for school board and state representative (2008), and have been involved in other national and local campaigns. I have lived in W Michigan since 2001. I've been a Grand Haven Chamber member since 1985, and serve on the Policy Committee. I'm a member and trustee at First Presbyterian Church (GH). I've successfully run a growing retail and service business for 40 years, including the real estate. We've owned and operated apartments, up to 20 units.

My BA degree includes Economics, Political Science and Urban Studies. Community service includes coaching Science Olympiad and sub teaching. We answer the phone at Rock 'n' Road Cycle, just as Bryce did this morning. We're really good at customer service.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

To be a servant in Lansing to all the people in the district.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

Labor, affordable housing for employees, and education.

Businesses need a skilled, experience and educated workforce, at commensurate wages. We need to adequately fund excellent public education, increasingly through associate degree level, including skilled trades.

Housing needs to be available at affordable prices locally to retain talent. Zoning can be part of the problem; lot size, setbacks; we're making progress!

As a Democrat, I can work with the majority in Lansing and the administration to gain funding, make adjustments to legislation to accomplish our community's goals, in contrast to just being a 'no' vote.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues? My personal values and beliefs are that as a public servant in office my roles is to work to solve the public's issues. My bias is to help the middle and working class, but so often what helps most of us is beneficial to all.

7. In what areas do you feel you can make the most difference as a local elected official? Being known to the community, accessible, and working to address issues cooperatively.

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

By attending meetings, staying in touch, updating members on pertinent developments in Lansing in an objective and informative way. Also by getting to know more business leaders and listening.

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

Plus one.

A women's freedom to have control of reproductive healthcare.

Quality public education for all.

Truly adequate road funding, user fees and fuel tax increase if necessary.

But the overriding issue is democracy at state, because if we can't agree a valid election is fair and try to overturn valid results without evidence everything we hold dear is at stake.

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

I'm sure we'll cover it in person. Thank you for your time and commitment.

Send completed questionnaires to:

Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce

Attn: Rachel Gorman

Email: rgorman@muskegon.org

380 West Western Avenue, Suite 202

Muskegon, MI 49440

Questions: 231-722-3751

Name: Greg VanWoerkom

Phone: 231-215-5712

Email: greg@votevanwoerkom.com

Website: <https://www.votevanwoerkom.com>

Office Sought: State Representative - District 88

Party: Republican

Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?

Yes, I am currently serving my third term as State Representative.

Have you ever owned a business?

Yes, I am part owner of Wonderland Distilling Co.

Qualifications and experience that makes you the best candidate.

I have served as State Representative for three terms. During that time, I was the Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor and Economic Opportunity, and am currently the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Tax Policy. Last year, I was named the Small Business Association Legislator of the Year, for my work on childcare and economic development.

I have also served on various local boards including School Board President of Western Michigan Christian and on United Way of the Lakeshore. I am a small business owner and raising three children here on the lakeshore.

What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

The role of a state representative is to serve as a voice for their constituents. This means advocating for their needs, keeping them up to date on issues that might impact them, and protecting their ability to live, work, and raise a family here in West Michigan.

What do you believe are the top 3 issues facing Muskegon businesses and how can you address them?

I believe that the top 3 issues facing Muskegon businesses are the continually rising costs, the need for increased access to affordable childcare, and the poor economic environment for Michigan businesses.

It is clear that businesses and families are struggling with inflation. I voted for individuals, families, and retirees to keep more of their hard-earned money in their own pockets as government policies and excessive spending have contributed to rising costs.

In the childcare sector, I worked to create the Tri-Share program to expand access to childcare for working families. There are still steps we can take to improve upon this program and further policies we can enact to expand access to childcare for all Michigan families.

Michigan's population has continued to stagnate. This is in part due to our state's struggles in bringing high-paying jobs and the need for the creation of a better economic climate. As described below, I have worked on multiple plans to help address this.

How do you balance personal beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?

There will always be some balance that has to be drawn between your beliefs and the many pressures of the position but at the end of the day, I've always approached the job as a means to improve the quality of life for the people of West Michigan and build a greater community here on the lakeshore so my kids will want to live and raise a family here.

I've worked across the aisle on many bi-partisan packages and will continue working to craft sound policy rather than focusing on the headline.

In what areas do you think you can make the most difference as an elected official?

I think that one of the areas I have made the most difference in as an elected official is the appropriations process. During my time as the Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government, I worked to get funding for many projects such as the Muskegon Airport roof, Mona Lake watershed remediation and study, Muskegon Boys and Girls Club, etc.

However, there are still many other projects I have worked on outside of the appropriations process and I think this position has allowed me to work in many different sectors. This past term I worked closely on crime victims rights legislation, economic development legislation, etc.

How will you leverage Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce as a resource if elected?

I will continue to leverage the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce the way I have since I was first elected. The chamber has played an essential role in connecting me with businesses and keeping me up to date on anything that might impact our business community. These conversations have allowed me to better craft legislation and have greatly impacted my ability to serve our communities.

If elected, what are your top 3 priorities?

If re-elected, my top 3 priorities will be supporting Michigan businesses, expanding access to childcare, and supporting our schools.

I have been working on multiple plans to support Michigan businesses. Most recently, I have worked on a bi-partisan plan to provide support for startups in our state. I am also working on a bi-partisan plan to create a research and development tax credit for businesses.

As mentioned earlier, there is still important work to be done to expand access to childcare for all Michigan families and support our childcare providers. I think one area that needs to be looked at is funding for childcare facilities to assist with building and expansion.

With education, the government response to the pandemic has left our kids behind academically. I voted to get our schools open and provide resources like literacy coaches to get our kids back to where they need to be and ensure their futures remain bright.

Anything else you would like to share?

Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce 2024 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Lois Maassen

Phone: (616) 836 6485

Office Sought: Michigan House District 89

Party: Democratic

Website: maassenfor89th.com

Email: lois.maassen.for89th@gmail.com

- 1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office? If yes, what office?**
 - a. I have not.
- 2. Have you ever owned a business or has someone in your family owned a business? If yes, please describe**
 - a. Since 2007, I have worked with my husband in our own small business. We provide marketing, strategy, and organizational development services and environmental graphic design to nonprofits and for-profit companies of all sizes.
- 3. Briefly describe the qualifications and experience you possess that make you the best candidate for this office.**
 - a. Over the decades of my career, I have worked for Fortune 500 companies and for single-person start-ups. I have learned to understand how different organizations work, how to collaborate with a variety of different skill sets and personalities, how to research and seek out expertise when confronted with a new challenge, and how to persevere to make things happen--even when it's complicated. I've also been an active volunteer, which expands my understanding of our community and the range of experiences it comprises. I'm also a mother and grandmother, which makes me deeply invested in a future for our region and the generations who will follow us.
- 4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?**
 - a. I take the title of the role literally: A representative in the Michigan House is to represent the people who live in the district. Two-way communication is vital to successful representation: Engaging as many residents as possible in conversation to understand their priorities and needs, working collaboratively with businesses and nonprofits in the region to gain a deep understanding of possibilities, and then maintaining communications to report back on progress, challenges, and ways that the process can be supported within our democratic process.
- 5. What do you consider to be the top three issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?**
 - a. First is continued economic development, which relies on attracting and retaining qualified employees and assuring support for start-ups and long-established businesses.
 - b. Second is continued infrastructure improvement as basic to an environment for both living and working.
 - c. Third is assuring attention to sustainability of our environment and the Great Lakes. The natural beauty of the area is critical to tourism, as well as one of the attractors for prospective employees and new businesses.

- d. I don't have silver-bullet action plans. What I can do to address each of these complex issues is to be hungry to learn from all perspectives about what success looks like, bring creative problem-solving skills to bear, find middle paths to balance polarities, and work collaboratively across perceived boundaries to get things done.
- 6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?**
- a. I see analogous balance issues with my work as a business consultant. When I work with an organization, I'm facilitating a process for thinking together, for identifying and gathering the information we need to make a good decision, for assuring that all voices are heard and perspectives are represented. My agenda is about the process, not driving toward a specific outcome. I see a House representative as similar; I would approach the work with an attitude of public service, not with a personal agenda to accomplish. My personal values--of, for example, authenticity, honesty, treating others with respect, commitment to democracy--would inform how I do the work.
- 7. In what areas do you feel you can make the most difference as a local elected official?**
- a. My background suggests I'll make the most difference when systems thinking is required--for a complex issue or one in which multiple competing needs require finding common ground. Defining issues narrowly is not helpful in those circumstances; environmental issues need to be considered with economic development, for example, and health care and education are interdependent.
- 8. How will you leverage and utilize the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce as a resource should you be elected?**
- a. The Chamber would be invaluable in connecting me with appropriate expertise and providing forums for discussion of salient issues. Attending Chamber events would enable me to learn from Muskegon businesspeople and hear first-hand about their challenges and achievements--and to talk about how the state government can be supportive.
- 9. If elected, what are your top three priorities?**
- a. Improving the health of our democracy by reinvigorating civil and civic discourse, assuring voter information and access, and demonstrating the good that can come from engagement with our government of, for, and by the people.
 - b. Assuring sustainability in our environment--from ensuring clean water and air and addressing pollutants (and neighborhoods disproportionately affected) to safeguarding the health of our waterways and Great Lakes. It's also time to acknowledge the reality of climate change. We owe it to our grandchildren to mitigate the effects.
 - c. Every resident of the 89th District needs the opportunity to engage in a thriving community. The needs vary across the district, but include affordable housing, access to health care (including for mental health), quality education, and fulfilling and rewarding work.
- 10. Is there anything else that you would like to share?**

- a. While I live in Ottawa County, Muskegon figures prominently in my family history. My mother was born there, and I grew up hearing about her childhood and education there. Family ties meant that I'd be present over the years to witness the challenges and then the transformation of the community; I applaud the sustaining spirit.

Name: Luke Meerman

Phone: 616-617-9400

Office Sought: State Representative

Party: Republican

Website: N/A

Email: MeermanLuke@outlook.com

1. Have you ever been appointed or elected to public office?
If yes, which office?

I have served as a state representative since 2019. From 2012 - 2018, I served as a township trustee in Polkton Township, Ottawa County.

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

I am a lifelong dairy farmer and previously operated a cheese making business. I have also owned and operated a mechanic's shop on my family's farm in Polkton Township.

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

To be an effective state representative, it is critical to work in a bipartisan fashion to effectuate change and enact policies that benefit the state as a whole. The state house sees individuals from all walks of life come together in the same chamber on behalf of their constituencies and working with others is what it takes to get the job done. While we all have our own viewpoints, I am ready to work with officials from the opposite party to find bipartisan solutions and will never close doors because someone has different political beliefs than myself.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

It is the job of a state representative to be the community's voice in our state's legislature, to advocate on its behalf and to assist in state government matters when needed. The role of a lawmaker is to sponsor legislation that improves government efficiency and fixes issues facing constituents and businesses.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

The three issues I see and will work to address are 1) the income tax increase that is a result of increased government spending in the 2024 tax year. Tax year 2023 saw the income tax decrease due to a 2015 law that would automatically lower the income tax if state revenue growth outpaced the rate of inflation. Increased spending will see the income tax increase on

taxes filed in 2025 and I will work to lower government spending so the state can once again reduce its income tax rate for individuals and small businesses to keep more of their income.

2) Rising inflation is making the cost of doing business more expensive and necessary goods and services are increasing in cost for consumers. While inflation is not an issue that any one lawmaker may address, government spending must be reeled in so we do not lose the value of the dollar. Encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses will lead to growth that can help drive inflation down.

3) Muskegon businesses rely on talented and knowledgeable workers to fill positions and creating educational opportunities for workers to acquire in-demand skills is vital for businesses. I believe changes can be made to the Michigan Merit Curriculum to allow for high school students to focus on the skills they will need to be competitive for the roles they wish to fill in the future.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?

The responsibility of an elected official is to work on behalf of the constituency and to be a voice for the community's values. Making difficult decisions on legislation is necessary and during my time in office, I often enter discussions with those who have beliefs that differ from mine. I am willing to discuss all issues that are related to the public's interest however, there are issues that intersect with my personal beliefs that I will be unable to change my opinion on.

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

I believe my knowledge and understanding of Michigan agriculture places me in a position to advocate for the family farm operations that provide Michigan its food. I have worked in agriculture my entire career and I firmly believe the ever changing regulatory environment affecting Michigan farms is bad for business. I will work to be a voice for Michigan agriculture to support farmers' work.

I also have worked on school safety legislation that will support students' mental health and safety in schools. I will continue to work in this area to identify policies that will keep students safe and provide increased access to mental health resources.

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

The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce is a valuable resource when working with local businesses and advancing economic policy. I previously worked to secure funding for the Southeast Regional Force Main project that will connect the City of Coopersville in Ottawa County, and area businesses, to Muskegon County's wastewater treatment facility. This project will allow farming operations that faced wastewater limitations to continue to grow and contribute to the economy. I appreciated the role the Chamber had in making this project possible and will work with the Chamber in the future to find solutions to support the business

community. The Chamber has also provided insightful information on the economic conditions of Muskegon County and I will continue to use the Chamber as a resource.

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

My top priorities will be to 1) address the regulatory environment created by the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE). As a farmer, EGLE regulations have burdened family farming operations with ever shifting expectations and are making the job of growing and raising our food extraordinarily difficult. 2) Promoting school choice and empowering parents to take a more active role in their students' education, whether that be through enrolling them in a charter public school, private school, or homeschool. 3) Supporting school safety initiatives and policies to keep students safe.

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

I appreciate the opportunity to address these questions and look forward to meeting with Chamber officials to further discuss my candidacy for state representative.

Send completed questionnaires to:
Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce
Attn: Rachel Gorman
Email: rgorman@muskegon.org
380 West Western Avenue, Suite 202
Muskegon, MI 49440
Questions: 231-722-3751

Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce

2024 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Kathy G. Pelleran-Mahoney
Office Sought: 102nd SH District
Website: Pelleran-mahoney.com

Phone: 231-292-1004 (office)
Party: Democratic
Email: kpmahoney@pelleran-mahoney.com

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

Yes, appointed 1 year; elected 6 years as a Trustee, Lansing Community College Board of Trustees. Appointed as Montague City Clerk 2019 through 2020.

2. Have you ever owned a business or has someone in your family owned a business:

Yes, both. My family owned a small business in Alpena. It was a market that sold fresh produce and nursery items. I have had Lakeshore Consulting for nine years -- public relations and write grants.

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

Community Partner: I live in Muskegon County, buy local, and support our thriving communities.

Public Experience: My public service spans 42 years: two years on state senate staff; six years on U.S. Senate staff; and one year on Congressional staff; seven years on a college board; 25 years in the nonprofit sector. I researched, wrote, and promoted passage of legislation at all levels of government.

Small Business: More than a decade as a public affairs/public relations consultant; 20 years in a family-owned business.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

As a solutions-based leader who does strategic planning I'll work to identify and involve stakeholders at the front end of projects; my objectives are to partner and bring things back to the community. It is important to represent the best interests of my constituents as a state representative, whether it is in helping them to navigate the bureaucracy, resolving conflicts with state agencies, or seeking a legislative remedy at the state level (and perhaps seeking solutions across government levels and various bureaucracies). Where people have problems, I'm there to facilitate a solution.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

I believe that the top three issues facing Muskegon County businesses today are labor, supply, and impact.

Labor: Recruitment & retention of a diverse workforce representative of our thriving community, skill development, and worker transportation and childcare.

Supply: Cost of supplies, availability of supplies to produce products and deliver service, transportation ease to receive goods and to deliver to market.

Impact: Manufacturing, agri-processing, service, retail, and helping local consumers have access to buy local, and other consumers to buy our products/services. Available to consumers via transportation or telecommunication; maintaining customer base via quality, quantity, and affordability.

In my role as a state representative, I will address these issues by:

- reviewing regulations with stakeholders to streamline and modernize them to reduce redundancies in agencies;
- provide an oversight eye to the executive branch that handles regulations;
- supporting our healthcare sector that is vital to all to live, work, and play in our west shore community;
- supporting a strong public education pre-K through college and trade school to ensure accessibility and affordability;
- supporting childcare solutions for a vibrant workforce;
- supporting partnership opportunities for business and labor with all entities to ensure pipelines from school to careers that are in demand;
- supporting infrastructure to do business and move products – communications, transportation, public safety to deliver products and services;
- support for infrastructure like utilities, transportation, communications, and public safety to ensure production/service
- providing incentives to bring and keep domestic production to ensure availability of supply chain products and parts for manufacturing;
- advocating for solid trade agreements with domestic and foreign markets;
- part of the role of being a state representative is in facilitating stakeholder meetings to align parties, reach consensus, achieve goals.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?

I'm a results-oriented individual who has worked for the common good across my career. Where people have had problems, I've worked to solve them. I've never been partisan in my work and don't require folks to share my philosophy before offering aid. Support for my fellow citizen has been instilled in me by my parents with a strong sense of duty to my community and my neighbors. In lifting all boats, we lift our own. Across my career, I have been proud to work for and gain solutions to real problems; I often facilitated a win-win situation as the end result for all parties involved. It required keeping lines of communication open to ensure the ability to continue to negotiate.

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

As a state-elected official I will address people's problems with the sense of urgency that they are experiencing. I am committed to working quickly with them to get answers and results. I can hit the ground running as I've had **decades of experience** in working both within the legislative process and from the-outside-in for legislative and administrative remedies across sectors and governmental levels to get results. In my impact priorities under question 5 above, I believe that there is a real opportunity to deal with regulatory redundancies that can be a win-win for all involved. I can facilitate real differences that are efficient and effective in addressing shortfalls in the public laws, and in assisting constituents as they navigate the bureaucracy. Having experience at all levels of government allows me to work efficiently and effectively across government for solutions.

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

As your state representative I'll have you on speed-dial with reciprocity to keep the lines of communication open with speedy responsiveness. I'll seek the following:

- An initial meeting to share your priorities; you'll have my cellphone number for direct access.
- When issues arise, I will alert you and seek your input, share key targets, and strategize for resolution.

9. If elected, what are your top priorities?

- Thank my voters, supporters, and endorsers.
- Get my office set-up with seasoned staff to be able to function on day 1.
- Get key committee assignments to support our priorities and set a forward agenda.
- Meet regularly with stakeholders in the district.

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

Part of success in the Legislature is in knowing its processes and establishing relationships within the body and with the other branches of state government. Having worked for and within the sector for nearly forty years allows me the ability to execute my job with precision to get solid and expeditious results. Efficiency and effectiveness are my objectives to reach goals for our people. Where people have problems with government, I'll work immediately for solutions. Where laws and regulations are ineffective or cumbersome, I'll write/introduce legislation and work on a bipartisan level with my colleagues to pass it to modernize the law. You will have direct access to me and we'll work together to get results.

When I first moved to the lakeshore I worked as the director of community investment, planning, and grants for United Way of the Lakeshore where I considered the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce a great partner. I attended many of your events and activities including your holiday parties and Business for Breakfast. I am a proud Muskegon STAR! graduate and smile as I recall all that I learned from the experience. As a staffer for with the Michigan State Senate and the U.S. Senate, I've had the direct experience working with economic and community development projects in southeast Michigan, northern Michigan and the eastern U.P., and in our Capital Region. I was pleased to help people get results no matter their quandary.

Thank you for your kind attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

K.P.

Kathy Pelleran-Mahoney
Candidate, 102nd HD

Name: Curt VanderWall
Office Sought: State Rep.
Website: Curtvanderwall.com

Phone: 231 690 3366
Party: Republican
Email: curtvanderwall101@gmail.com

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

If yes, what office?

State Rep 2016-17
State Senate 2018-2021
State Rep 2022-current
Mason County Commission 2010-16

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

Owner of Turf Care Mole Man in Ludington

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

I am a pro-business candidate and need to make a better environment for small businesses and workers. I also have worked extensively on issues such as child care, health care, and econ. dev.

4. What do you believe should be the role of the office you are seeking?

We're to be the voice of the community in the district and then the state to promote a positive impact on work, life, and family.

5. What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Muskegon County businesses today and, if elected, how can you address them?

1. Costs including staffing, inflation, cost of inputs/shipping etc.
2. Housing availability and affordability
3. Child care cost and availability—This helps address the staffing issue to retain more people to workforce.

6. How do you balance personal values and beliefs with problem solving for the public's issues?

The job of a state rep is to have an open ear and mind to the issues. Advocating for the district is crucial and working with the community to get things done is the most effective.

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

easing bureaucratic burdens to implement common sense legislation. I work very closely with community and business leaders to make positive changes at home.

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

Consulting with them when relevant issues arise. Using them as a resource to learn about the issues that are directly affecting Muskegon County and the townships/cities I serve.

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

1. Making health care more affordable and accessible
2. Working to restore tax cuts and ease the burden of high costs
3. Protecting and preserving our natural resources

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

Send completed questionnaires to:
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