

VOTER GUIDE – NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE

Tuesday, November 3, 2020
POLLS ARE OPEN 7:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OAKLAND AREA

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3 Candidates for TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR for ONE 4-year term

| CANDIDATES for SUPERVISOR ONE 4-year term <i>Vote for no more than ONE</i> | Question 1 (150 Words or less): Provide biographical information and explain why you are running for Township office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position. | Question 2 (150 Words or less): What are the top 3 Priority Issues facing your township and what actions would you, as a township official, take regarding each of them? |
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| <p><i>Democrat</i> PAMELA SUE JACKSON 5736 Lancaster Ln. Commerce, MI 48382</p> | <p>I am a retired professor of mathematics, construction mgt., and concrete constr. mgt. Currently, I am a trustee at Oakland Community College managing a \$170M budget; maintaining fiscal responsibility and serving on a steering committee for two multi-million dollar renovation projects at the college. My experiences as a department chair and interim dean at OCC have allowed me to oversee numerous departments, committees and budgets, and large renovation projects. These skill sets are needed with the volume of the construction projects taking place in the township. I have volunteered for: Lakes Area Rotary Club, Novi Lions Club, and the Marilyn Violet Foundation, and as a project manager for Home-Aide renovating an apartment complex for homeless veterans in Warren. I will continue to volunteer in the community. As Supervisor, I will focus on fiscal responsibility, maintaining a supportive work environment, giving exceptional service and assuring open communications with township residents and businesses. I have a long history working with students and teachers, local business leaders, state and local government officials, which is a beneficial attribute for a township supervisor.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I would like to make sure that our tax base remains low and that the township uses the tax dollars wisely, being fiscally responsible to the tax payers. 2) Responsible Growth: With my construction background, I will make sure that responsible construction takes place with the township's building projects: from the Brownfield cleanup of the gravel pit on Sleeth Road (future subdivision), the construction along the M5 Corridor, the construction of Fire Station 3 and relocation of the sheriffs' substation for more accessibility and protection of our community, restoring Byers and Windmill Farms and other historic locations, and finally, maintenance of our infrastructure so as not to harm our lakes, waterways, and green spaces. 3) We need to create more walkable and bikeable pathways throughout the township. More discussions on transit issues need to take place. People's Express can be used by qualifying citizens (55+) and the disabled (18+) until the end of 2020. I would appreciate your vote so that the items listed above, and more, can be accomplished. |

COMMERCE TOWNSHIP (Continued)

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| <p><i>Republican</i> LARRY EUGENE GRAY, JR. 2115 Glen Iris Ct. Commerce, MI 48382</p> | <p>Not only am I a 30+ year resident of Commerce Township, firefighter for over 25 years, but also currently serve as the Vice President of Multi Lakes Conservation Association. I previously served as the President of the Commerce Township Fire Department Association, President of Firefighter Association of Michigan (FAOM), and Chairman of the Board on the Board of Directors for Multi Lakes. I've actively volunteered my time as a leader for Adopt-a-road Cleanup for Oakland County, Shop with a Hero, MDA Boot Drive, and Goodfellows collections and delivering meals. I have received five Life Saving awards from Commerce Township, and a Lifesaving Citation from Oakland County Sheriff's Office. I bring over 25 years of successful management, negotiations, and budgeting experience. More importantly, I am a family man. I have a wonderful wife, who I adore, and children and grandchildren that have been raised here and still live in the Township. My stepson, who is special needs, has opened my eyes to challenges families face with a special needs child/family member. It is our responsibility as a community to support these individuals of our community. I am a man of my word and always follow through.</p> | <p>In listening to the residents of Commerce Township, I promise to supervise the Township not social media. I will ensure the Township's continuous growth, but in a professional manner. I will partner with other members of the board and residents to do what is best for Commerce Township. We would accomplish this first by fulfilling the promises made to the residents and owners like Scarlett's Park and Windmill Farm. Once the already promised projects are complete, then and only then, can we move forward on additional projects to develop the Township. While growth is important, we must maintain and protect the parks and recreations, and natural resources in our Township. I believe it is imperative that as the supervisor I project my management insight to educate the administrators and committee delegates to make informed decisions to vote in the best interest of the residents and this township.</p> |

COMMERCE TOWNSHIP (Continued)

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| <p><i>Libertarian</i> BRUCE JAQUAYS 1841 Lerene Dr. Commerce, MI 48390</p> | <p>I am running for the office of Commerce Township Supervisor to bring a Libertarian attitude towards taxes and smaller government to our township. Also to bring awareness that the residents of Commerce Township have a choice besides the Duopoly that has been running our lives locally.</p> <p>I am a graduate of the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor 1983. I have lived in Commerce Township for 28 years in a humble ranch style house in the southern part of the township. I have volunteered in my daughters' schools in the PTA and as a Band Dad for the award winning Viking Marching band and Walled Lake Percussion team. I also volunteer at my church, Chinese Bible Church of Farmington Hills, as an usher and small group leader.</p> <p>In my 31 years with the USPS in Detroit, I have worked both sides of the supervisor/employee relationship. I also full appreciate the blood and sweat that goes into making the tax dollars that will be entrusted to me when I am supervisor. When I am elected to the office, I will be very motivated to do a great job. Besides my usual desire to take pride in my work, I will be a poster child for The Libertarian Party, good (hopefully). lp.org/platform jo20.com</p> | <p>The top three priorities I believe are facing Commerce Township are:</p> <p>Fiscal Stability; The township is not in a bad shape. But as we have seen lately that could change quickly depending on government above us. All of our residents and businesses have been affected financially by the pandemic and government's response to it. This affects also the township's ability to pay its bills which could result in cut backs to service. My solution to this problem is to make Commerce Township an "Everything is Essential Zone" (EEZ). Following the lead of South Dakota, keep everything open and be safe while doing it. This will help business and residents who use those businesses and also work there. I feel it would also encourage more businesses to move to Commerce Township.</p> <p>Public safety: The township is one of the safest in Michigan and the nation. I will continue to fully fund our public safety officers and fire staffing levels. I will encourage more patrolling of neighborhoods instead of sitting on medians like Novi cops. I will also encourage a focus on crimes with a victim over victimless crimes.</p> <p>Traffic: Damned if you do something and damned if you don't. We must work with RCOC.</p> |

1 Candidate for TOWNSHIP CLERK for ONE 4-year term

MELISSA CREECH 9440 Newton Place Rd., Commerce, MI 48390

1 Candidate for TOWNSHIP TREASURER for ONE 4-year term

MOLLY B. PHILLIPS 2870 Ravinewood Dr., Commerce, MI 48382

COMMERCE TOWNSHIP (Continued)

4 Candidates for TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE for FOUR 4-year terms

| CANDIDATES for TRUSTEE FOUR 4-year term <i>Vote for no more than FOUR</i> | Question 1 (150 Words or less): Provide biographical information and explain why you are running for Township office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position. | Question 2 (150 Words or less): What are the top 3 Priority Issues facing your township and what actions would you, as a township official, take regarding each of them? |
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| <p><i>Republican</i> BOB BERKHEISER 5150 Joe Dr. Commerce, MI 48382</p> | <p>I have been married to my wife Christine for 36 years. I am a father to six children, three are natural born, one adopted, and two are my nieces. I served in the United States Air Force for 20 years as a pharmacist. I now work for a major pharmaceutical company as an account executive in the Federal Market. I am active in my church, the Township Parks and Recreation Committee, and an Eagle Scout mentor for Troop 308 of the Boy Scouts. I am an Eagle Scout, my sons are Eagle Scouts. While I was the Scoutmaster, I had 25 Scouts attain the rank of Eagle. I enjoy camping, fishing, and sports.</p> <p>I have been a Trustee for 8 years and have been very fiscally minded. During my time in the military I have managed hospital budgets in excess of \$75 M. This has directly helped me when it comes to budget time with the Township.</p> | <p>As a Trustee for Commerce Township for the last eight years, we have many open items/projects on our plate. We are in the process of replacing a sorely needed fire station and developing a new Sherriff substation. We are working diligently on creating an environment for Windmill horse farm to be successful and serve the needs of the community. On top of all of those projects, we are in the middle of developing a new business district, 5 th and Main, at Martin Parkway and Pontiac Trail. All of this is important, but, to me accomplishing this in the most fiscally responsible way is of utmost importance. We have limited funds, and I want to make sure they are spent in the most prudent way. I believe the biggest challenges facing the township will be fiscal in nature. Depending on how the economy comes back, there will be a loss in state funding and local tax base. I think the current board has done a good job being fiscally responsible with tax payer dollars. I will be prepared to respond to the Downtown Development Authority's (DDA) Martin Parkway bond repayment debt while guiding the Township into the future. I will be cautious in allocating tax dollars to projects that can wait.</p> |

COMMERCE TOWNSHIP (Continued)

| CANDIDATES for TRUSTEE FOUR 4-year term <i>Vote for no more than FOUR</i> | Question 1 (150 Words or less): Provide biographical information and explain why you are running for Township office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position. | Question 2 (150 Words or less): What are the top 3 Priority Issues facing your township and what actions would you, as a township official, take regarding each of them? |
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| <p><i>Republican</i> VANESSA MAGNER 4500 Commerce Woods Dr. Commerce, MI 48382</p> | <p>In 2007 I moved to Commerce Township with my husband. We started our family here and love raising our two children in this town. In 2003 I started working at Commerce Township as a Clerical Administrator, was promoted to Deputy Clerk in 2009, and appointed Township Clerk in 2013. These different positions within the Township have given me a whole-view perspective of how internal processes work and the history that comes along with it. I was proudly elected as a Township Trustee in 2016. Also in 2016, I shifted my career path and was hired at Community Choice Credit Union. In addition, I have also been a board member of Lakes Area Youth Assistance since 2014. My focus is to be fiscally responsible while keeping our community safe. Being a full-time working mother and wife, my goal as a Township Trustee is to represent the working families in Commerce Township.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managing our budget and being fiscally responsible. Keeping a low tax rate while providing services to keep Commerce Township a beautiful, clean, and safe community. I keep an open mind while I listen to the residents on their needs and wants as we make decisions. 2. Public safety will continue to be a priority. It is the Township Board’s responsibility to ensure the police and fire departments have the supplies, tools, and staff needed to keep Commerce Township safe. 3. Traffic throughout the community needs to be addressed. We must work with developers and the road commission to manage the traffic flow. As new developments are proposed, we need to consider traffic concerns as a part of the planning and decision-making process. |
| <p><i>Republican</i> RICK SOVEL 8452 Golfside Dr. Commerce, MI 48382</p> | <p>My experience qualifies me to be a Trustee. I currently serve the residents of Commerce Township as a Trustee. I am also a member of the Commerce Township Zoning Board of Appeals, a past member of the Commerce Township Library Advisory Board and have served on other Township committees. I am a business owner running a successful business. I am active in the community and strive to get the most out of our tax dollars.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public safety is always a top priority. Providing excellent police service and upgrading the fire department to advance life support and emergency/rescue service. Commerce Township was recently named one of the 20 safest communities in Michigan. 2. Expanding our parks and recreation system, pathways, bike trails, and the Air Line Trail. Connecting subdivisions to the trail system. 3. Maintaining a low tax rate and a balanced budget while getting the most out of our tax dollars “without raising taxes” is critical. |

COMMERCE TOWNSHIP (Continued)

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| <p><i>Republican</i> GEORGE K. WEBER 877 Laguna Dr. Wolverine Lake, MI 48390</p> | <p>My family and I fell in love with, and moved to Commerce Township 34 years ago. The parks, greenspace, lakes, and warm people drew us here; we can't see ourselves living anywhere else. I have been married to my wife Mickie for more than 40 years and we have one daughter who now lives in Phoenix. Mickie works at the Richardson Senior Center and I retired from Ford Motor Company after nearly 32 years, where I started at the Wixom plant and ended in Dearborn as the Director of Global Market Representation. My experience at Ford developed my focus on customer service, attention to detail, the importance of community, and my fiscal responsibility. I have a proven track record for delivering results while never losing sight of integrity and compassion. After retiring and feeling so blessed in life, I knew I had to serve the area we love so much. In addition to Trustee, I am a home care volunteer for Angela Hospice and a member of our church Hospitality Committee. For fun, I am restoring my high school 1968 Camaro (I take a lot of grief from my Ford buddies for having a Chevy in the garage!), play softball, golf, boat, explore our parks, and harass my lovely wife whenever possible.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managing Growth. Families and business want to move to Commerce Township. While this is great for property values, we must balance this growth with maintaining our "bedroom community DNA." Our parks and greenspace must be protected by addressing increasing congestion. I do not believe we need more high-density apartment buildings other than what we already have planned. 2. Safety & Continued Focus On Fiscal Responsibility. We will see a significant shortfall in state funding due to the pandemic. The Board has done an excellent job being fiscally conservative; our funding/budgets for Police, Fire/Rescue, and Water & Sewer all have been prioritized and protected. We need to forecast longer term revenue effects, prioritize spending based on Township needs vs. wants, and NO NEW TAXES. 3. Traffic Congestion - While Commerce Twp. is a destination, the growth of "pass through" traffic to surrounding areas is compounding our problem. The first priority is to resolve the Union Lake Road bottle neck. We have begun discussions with the Oakland County Road Commission to change the intersections where Martin Pkwy ends and Union Lake road begins - we must map a new road and deliver this. |

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan national organization whose purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party. Candidate responses are included as submitted and have not been edited except in cases where the replies have exceeded the stated word limitations. **Spelling and Grammar were not corrected.** The inclusion of candidates' statements and opinions is solely in the interest of public service and in no way is to be construed as an endorsement by the League of Women Voters which takes no responsibility for any views or facts stated by the candidates.