

Welcome to your Carver County Local News 2024 Voter's Guide

Citizens who live in Carver County have the opportunity this fall to “hire” our government representation. All it takes is the act of voting.

Candidates from city council all the way up to U.S. president are on the ballot this year, with final voting on Nov. 5, 2024, to find out if the “elected official” will be on their resume for 2025 and beyond.

Carver County Local News (CCLN) has invited candidates of local races to answer questions related to the office they are seeking, to have the chance to be included in our Voter's Guide.

You'll see that our Voter's Guide includes candidates for city council, mayor, local referendum, school board, county commissioner and state representative. Our CCLN service area currently includes the cities of Chaska, Chanhassen, Victoria and Carver. Regarding the races we have not included in our Voter's Guide, other news sources provide information regarding those races, e.g. U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Senate and U.S. president.

We invite you to become a subscriber to our Carver County Local News (CCLN) and to consider a financial donation of any size. We are a nonprofit organization.

If you would consider being a volunteer with CCLN, we would love to have you join us! The extent to which we can become a thriving local news organization is directly related to donations of time (volunteers), money (financial donations), and subscriber numbers.

Thank you for any and all the ways you can be part of CCLN!



Information about Voting

What's on my ballot? <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/whats-on-my-ballot/> -- View your sample ballot

Register to vote or check your voter registration: <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/register-to-vote/>
 -- To register to vote or to check your voter registration or who can vote.

Where do I go to vote in-person on election day November 5th? <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/election-day-voting/> -- Note that some polling place assignments have changed since the last presidential election four years ago. It is good to know the assigned local polling place prior to election day. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day. Identify your polling location and bring proof of residency to the poll if you're registering to vote on that day.

How can I vote early or vote from home? <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/other-ways-to-vote/> -- For citizens of Carver County, you can vote early at the Carver County Government Center (Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.), now through November 4. Any citizen has the option to vote from home, however be sure to allow sufficient time to request an absentee ballot, the ballot would be mailed to you, you would complete it, and return the ballot. The link also allows you to request an **absentee ballot**. Use the link also to track your absentee ballot and to learn how to vote in the military or when living abroad.

Who can vote? <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/register-to-vote/who-can-vote/> -- If you are age 18 or older on Election Day and are registered to vote – or will register at the polls – you can help determine who's hired to serve you in elected office and who is not.

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Questions: Email
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Name: Kristy Mock

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Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Lived in Carver for 11 years. Have been involved in the community for 20 years.

Previous leadership experience: My local government experience spans over 20 years, including as the former Parks and Recreation Supervisor for the City of Carver, from 2007-2015. I previously worked for the City of Victoria and the City of Chanhassen in Community Development and Parks and Recreation.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Past president and current member of the Carver Lions Club. Coordinator for the Lions Golf Tourney annual medical fundraiser. Led roadside clean-up volunteers through the Carver Lions Club and Boy Scouts. Current event manager for the Carver Steamboat Days Committee and town celebration.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: Through my past work experience for the City of Carver and now with my tenure as a second-term city councilmember, I have the experience, background, knowledge and area connections to continue to lead wisely. I will continue to lead by listening to those who have elected me, by moving forward with a knowledge base of being integrated into the community, and with respect for voters who put their faith in me to represent them.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the City and how would you address these?

1. Sustainable communities for all ages/abilities. Create ways to offer services and amenities to young, aged and those with differing capabilities.
2. Infrastructure/maintenance. Many of Carver's roads and infrastructure need replacement and upgrades. Manage burden on taxpayers, while continuing to work through the Pavement Management Plan created to counter this issue.
3. Taxing/spending. As a growing community, the weight of wants and needs can be difficult. Maintaining a manageable tax levy to keep residents in their homes and able to afford Carver. We created long-term systems to use cash on hand when appropriate to fund projects rather than taking out bonds which include the repayment of additional interest fees. This long-range planning will be a savings to residents.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? I have a great deal of experience with Carver, its residents, and its growth. As former staff, I understand the inner workings of the local government staff and structure and the many specifics that are unique to Carver. As a second-term city councilmember, I have the long-term knowledge of the city's governance and can apply past knowledge and previous council actions while moving forward in the now high growth community.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? We are lucky to have a historic



Kristy Mock

downtown as a destination. We have increased our wayfinding routes and markers to increase downtown's visibility to the community. We are also carrying those design aesthetics into our new neighborhoods and entrance corridors to the City so that visitors recognize they are "in Carver." This creates a cohesive feel and can help eliminate the separation of new to old areas of town.

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? I can be somewhat of the "penny miser." Growth communities such as Carver can be difficult as most of the tax burden falls on the residential single-family homeowner. I am always cognizant of this fact, as it will continue until we broaden our tax base with commercial and industrial growth. The current economic downturn and inflation hits every household differently, and my goal is to keep people in their homes and not create a Carver where only the wealthy or the subsidized can sustain. Every person and every income has a place in Carver.

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? The city currently has the CDA building Carver Crossing with 66 units and is adding the second phase building with an additional 60 units. The final third phase is slated to include senior living facilities. We are adequately growing affordable housing at this rate, considering the available services in Carver. We need to provide additional jobs and essential services, including grocery, medical, etc. in proximity to these buildings to adequately support this type of housing.

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? Many times businesses are dependent on rooftops to make their decisions where to open up a new shopping or hospitality business. We have seen an uptick in businesses coming in near the

Hwy 212 interchange and school, and we would expect that to continue with the highway/county road infrastructure making the area highly accessible.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the city do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? The city is pro-business. I am pro-business. As stated previously, businesses often need to correlate the number of residential rooftops to make their business plans successful and to entice them to Carver as their next location. I believe it is wise to be careful with incentives for new businesses, as incentives often mean less revenue coming into the city and less or delayed money on the tax rolls. Our commercial and business sectors need to support Carver with their tax dollars and reduce the burden on the residential homeowner.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? The city has numerous ways for residents to receive information, including the website, social media accounts, a monthly newsletter in the utility bill, and email blasts. We are always open to finding additional ways to reach our residents, especially with the loss of our local newspapers.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? The city will continue to expand its residential developments with Carver County being one of the fastest growing counties in the state. As local farmers sell their land to developers, housing growth will continue. The economy will of course drive this, however, with the addition of homes comes the addition of services. Our Comprehensive Plan lays out growth plans for the city and this will guide the future growth.

"I have a great deal of experience with Carver, its residents, and its growth. As former staff, I understand the inner workings of the local government staff and structure and the many specifics that are unique to Carver. As a second-term city councilmember, I have the long-term knowledge of the city's governance and can apply past knowledge and previous council actions while moving forward in the now high growth community."

-- Kristy Mock

Name: Kayla Pascoe

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Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Carver, five years

Previous leadership experience: Chair of the Georgetown University Alumni Admissions Program.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Carver Lions, Guardian Angels Parish Pastoral Council, Carver County Mental Health Local Advisory Council, Carver County Water Management Organization, Crystal Community Outreach Taskforce

How have you prepared to serve well in this office? I have attended or viewed online city council meetings from the last year, analyzed the current budget proposal and the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and spoken directly with members of the community. I also am a licensed attorney with experience in legal analysis and contract interpretation.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the City and how would you address these?

1. Reduce the increases to the tax levy to a sustainable level. Last year's tax levy increase was 13.25% and this year it is proposed to be 12.67%. This is not sustainable, especially in a community where most people hold the majority of their wealth in their homes, which are gaining value faster than wages are increasing. I intend to reduce the city budget and day-to-day operating expenses, right-size city holdings, and reduce or eliminate bonding.
2. Maintain a pro-business environment. In order to attract businesses downtown, we need to reduce fees and red tape to allow for investment in property downtown. Lower property taxes and water costs will also benefit businesses as well as residents.
3. Create a united community. In a city like Carver, with several distinct areas, it is important to make sure that amenities and necessities are available and accessible to everyone in the community.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? I provide a fresh set of ideas to a council that represents residents throughout the community and those who have not had a voice in the development and planning of the growth in Carver.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? Small business development downtown is vital to maintaining the historic character of Carver. We also need to be sure to develop recreational facilities for the residents in new developments. Growth and development needs to be managed with the understanding that any growth will change the appearance and footprint of a city, but it does not need to change the community and its values.



Kayla Pascoe

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? Necessities must come first. All the nice-to-haves must be balanced and managed with the resident in mind. They are the ones paying for the amenities, and they need to serve them while keeping costs low in order to keep Carver an affordable place to live.

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? Pro-business, pro resident tax-and-fee policies will make all forms of development more affordable, including multi-unit buildings which can incur large fees and taxes that are passed on to renters.

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? Local businesses can be encouraged into the area by reducing redevelopment fees and red tape for these businesses. Small business owners do not have the time or liquid assets to sustain long redevelopment projects. Recreation and parks maintained by the city are a benefit to all residents, but cost, location and use should be in balance with the needs and desires of the community.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the city do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? Zoning should include

places for businesses near customers. Reduced fees, reasonable taxes and reduced red tape allow for new and existing businesses to flourish. Allowing companies to advertise will draw people into the downtown from the new development areas.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? The city needs to be more proactive in communicating when and how decisions are made regarding the city. Too often people care deeply about an issue and show up to a city council meeting to express their opinions far too late in the process. The council needs to inform interested residents of when they can voice their opinion when it will make the greatest impact. That means reaching out to citizens about issues the council knows they care about to inform them of Planning Commission, committee meetings and work sessions where decisions are actually made.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? In five to 10 years I envision Carver as a city that is vibrant, well connected and functional for all, while still respecting residents wishes and wallets.

“I provide a fresh set of ideas to a council that represents residents throughout the community and those who have not had a voice in the development and planning of the growth in Carver... In five to 10 years I envision Carver as a city that is vibrant, well connected and functional for all, while still respecting residents wishes and wallets.”

-- Kayla Pascoe

John Kobett is also a candidate for for an at-large seat on the Carver City Council, but he did not return responses to our questionnaire.



Name: Reid Welch

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Home community and how long have you lived in your community: We have lived in Carver for 16 years.

Previous leadership experience: City of Carver City Council: October 2023 – present; Carver County Parks & Recreation Commission: January 2022 – present; City of Carver Planning Commission: March 2019 - September 2023.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? City of Carver City Council: October 2023 – present; Carver County Parks & Recreation Commission: January 2022 – present; City of Carver Planning Commission: March 2019 - September 2023.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I have six years of experience serving on local and county government commissions. I am currently a member of the Carver City Council.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the city and how would you address these?

1. Fiscal Responsibility: The most important job for the city council is to spend money wisely. The most difficult aspect of this task for a growing city like Carver is ensuring items needed for the future growth, like water and sewer infrastructure, are available at the right time. The second requirement is to maintain the necessary level of city services as the population increases without overtaxing existing residents.
2. Managing Construction Projects: The levee construction project coming to Carver next year is a large-scale infrastructure project. The flood this summer has shown how important this levee is to the City of Carver. We must have effective planning and oversight on this multimillion-dollar project.
3. Support for future development: Carver is a growing community and needs strategic investment in infrastructure and well thought out planning and zoning.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? I have experience working for the local government on the Carver City Council, the Planning Commission for the City of Carver, and the Carver County Park and Recreation Commission. I have 25 years of engineering experience. I enjoy contributing to my community.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? I love the current character of Carver. My family and I enjoy the many trails and parks and always enjoy wandering downtown to admire the historic buildings and homes. The city has done a good job of keeping the small town feel even though the population has almost doubled in the time we have lived here. I plan to utilize Carver's comprehensive plan for zoning and development while continuing to maintain our historic downtown through the Historic Preservation Commission.



Reid Welch

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? The first priority is to determine the needs of the current residents of the city and ensure existing city services are maintained. We must also consider the needs of future residents to ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place for future growth. I support our current process of a 10-year moving window for each city department to identify the current and future needs for the City of Carver. The city has just finished reviewing the current plans through the year 2033.

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? I support the city's current program of reduced connection fees for affordable housing. The city has partnered with other government agencies for the recent affordable housing projects Carver Oaks and Carver Place. Carver Oaks is dedicated specifically for seniors and Carver Place is for growing families and has options for up to three bedrooms.

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? The biggest effect the city can have on future development is to ensure roads, sewer/water and other infrastructure are in place prior to development. The City of Carver should continue to ensure future projects like shopping and dining are placed in locations that benefit both the residents and the developer. The City of Carver is actively developing a new park named Creekside Park with pickleball courts and a dog park for large and small breed dogs. I plan to continue our partnership with the City of Chaska to provide additional recreational activities and facilities at a lower cost to the residents of Carver.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the city do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? The biggest obstacle to development is the ability to provide adequate infrastructure. A developer or business does not want to pay extra to

build new roads or install new water and sewer connections. If Carver provides the existing infrastructure, then we can foster a competitive business climate. I think Carver has a very competitive business climate. In the time I have been involved with the Planning Commission and the Carver City Council, many new businesses have opened in Carver. Some examples of recent businesses that have opened in Carver are O2B Kids Carver daycare, Carver Dental, Chiropractic Specialists of Carver, Strive Nutrition, Mizzy's Pizza, Healing Hands Veterinary Hospital, Lakeview Industries, Kwik Trip, The Carver Creamery, Next Steps Learning Center, Gateway Motor Café, Mocha Monkey coffee shop, and HomeTown Bank. We also have two more commercial projects that are in development.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? The City of Carver does an excellent job with transparency. Carver has an active Facebook page and a newsletter is sent with residents' utility bills. Recordings of the City of Carver's meetings are available on YouTube or on the city's website.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? I see Carver as a growing city with a small-town feel. The historic downtown and many parks and trails help Carver maintain the current small town feel even though the city has doubled in size since we first moved here. The growing population will allow us to attract new retail shops and commercial businesses.

“I have experience working for the local government on the Carver City Council, the Planning Commission for the City of Carver, and the Carver County Park and Recreation Commission. I have 25 years of engineering experience. I enjoy contributing to my community.”

-- Reid Welch





Chanhassen City Council At-Large Candidates

Name: Josh Kimber

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Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Chanhassen, 15 years

Previous leadership experience: Parks and Rec Task Force

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Chanhassen City Council, Southwest Transit Commission

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I have prepared to serve in this office through my experience on the council and the Parks and Rec Task force, where I’ve gained valuable insight into city operations, budgeting, and community development. My background working with businesses has sharpened my skills in managing resources and making impactful decisions. I stay engaged with residents, listen to their concerns, and continually seek ways to improve our community.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the City and how would you address these?

1. Managing growth through smart development.
 2. Building a strong community by supporting local businesses and fostering connections among residents.
 3. Maintaining infrastructure through careful budgeting and planning.
- These priorities will be addressed through community engagement, balanced budgeting, and thoughtful planning to ensure Chanhassen remains a vibrant and thriving city while preserving its unique character.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? My experience on the council, combined with my work as a small business owner, equips me with practical knowledge and a collaborative approach. I’ve demonstrated the ability to manage budgets, guide responsible development, and engage in open dialogue with residents to ensure their needs are met. I’m committed to making Chanhassen a community we’re all proud to call home.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? I support development that aligns with Chanhassen’s character, ensuring projects fit our community’s vision. By working closely with developers and incorporating resident feedback, we can achieve growth that enhances our city while preserving its charm and values.

What is your approach to managing the city’s budget and fiscal priorities? My approach is to prioritize essential services, infrastructure, and development projects while maintaining fiscal discipline. We must continue to be proactive in seeking diverse funding sources, like grants and partnerships, and manage the budget to minimize the financial burden on residents.



Josh Kimber

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? I support exploring more options for mixed-income housing when it makes sense for the city and its residents. Any affordable housing must align with Chanhassen’s infrastructure and growth plans, ensuring it’s located in areas that can support development while meeting the needs of essential workers and preserving our city’s character.

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? The city should continue listening to residents’ needs and finding cost-effective solutions to meet them. For example, the new Senior Center, part of the Civic Plaza project, was developed in response to the growing demand for expanded and dedicated space for senior activities. By expanding these facilities, the City will better serve this active and growing segment of our community.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the City do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? The city should listen to businesses and understand their challenges, working to create a more business-friendly environment. Last year, the Council learned about unexpected water and sewer connection fees that were burdening new businesses. In response, we found a way to waive these fees for some, saving over \$11,000 and supporting their growth. Continuing to address these concerns will help foster a competitive business climate in Chanhassen.

What, if anything, should the City do to increase transparency? Building trust with residents requires clear communication, open forums, and utilizing technology to live-stream meetings and share decision-making processes. I’m committed to transparency and accessibility. If residents have concerns, they should feel free to reach out to me directly by email or phone. Engaging in meaningful dialogue en-

ures accountability and helps address community needs effectively.

Where do you envision the City in the next five to 10 years? In five to 10 years, I envision Chanhassen as a thriving community with a balance of modern infrastructure, expanded recreation opportunities, and vibrant and diverse local businesses. Through responsible growth and strong community engagement, we will preserve our small-town charm while evolving to meet future needs.

“My experience on the council, combined with my work as a small business owner, equips me with practical knowledge and a collaborative approach. I’ve demonstrated the ability to manage budgets, guide responsible development, and engage in open dialogue with residents to ensure their needs are met. I’m committed to making Chanhassen a community we’re all proud to call home.”

-- Josh Kimber



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The **Carver County Local News** is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to returning a news operation to the Chanhassen, Chaska, Carver and Victoria area. Find us at <https://cclocalnews.org/>.

Volunteer subscriptions and financial donations will support the operation and sustain efforts to inform the general public about events, local happenings, governmental meetings, schools, sports and more.



Chanhassen City Council At-Large Candidates

Name: Nora Nashawaty

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Home community and how long have you lived in your community: I've lived in Chanhassen for 14 years. I have lived in the area (five minutes to the east) since 2006.

Previous leadership experience: University of Minnesota Genetic Counseling Program Admissions Committee, 2022-present; Genetic Risk Evaluation and Testing (GREAT) Technology Committee, 2024; National Society of Genetic Counseling Awards Committee, 2021-22; University of Washington Diversity, Anti-Racism and Equity Committee, 2021-22; National Youth Director of the Muslim American Society, 2016-20; Sojourner Project Domestic Violence Shelter, 2015; University of Minnesota Al-Madinah Cultural Center, President, 2012-15.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? I have been involved in advocacy and support organizations since high school. I have listed the ones I held leadership positions in within the last ten years above. I have also been involved in: Community of Belonging, Chanhassen, 2024; Local refugee support efforts, 2013-present, most recently through Building Blocks; Syrian American Medical Society, 2013-present; Islamic Relief, 2019-present; Feed My Starving Children volunteer, 2004-19; Students Organize for Syria, 2014-16.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I have run large national organizations, managing teams of 10+ individuals, budgets of several hundreds of thousands of dollars, training, and programming. I know how to gather information, make decisions that benefit the overall organization/people served, manage large budgets, develop and train teams, and treat people equitably. Most importantly, I know how to listen to people's needs and will place all of my efforts to support the residents of Chanhassen.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the City and how would you address these? My top three priorities for Chanhassen are housing accessibility, sustainability in city projects, and safe pedestrian/bike infrastructure. 1. Housing accessibility: I will work with the City Council and city staff to increase housing options and adjust zoning to allow for more varied housing options. Chanhassen's Strategic Plan is to build a community for a lifetime, which means that we strive to support residents from infancy until well past retirement. That implies that we create and protect housing options for the children of our residents too, especially when the price of housing has made home ownership elusive for Millennials. This extends to including options for retirees hoping to stay in this city. We also need to consider housing options for our workforce, especially considering that the City of Chanhassen is one of the largest employers here and people deserve to live where they work.

2. Safe pedestrian and bike-friendly infrastructure: Walkability is an increasingly important concern for residents choosing their future home cities. While some parts of our city have pedestrian and bike-friendly infrastructure, there is opportunity for improving it across neighborhoods. As redevelopment



Nora Nashawaty

oment and new development is considered, it is important pedestrian access is prioritized.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? My goal on city council is to listen. I want to make sure every resident has the opportunity to be heard and their concerns acknowledged. I want residents to know how to engage with the council and how to access their local lawmakers. I plan to make myself accessible on a regular basis in third spaces like restaurants and coffee shops to make engagement easier and more welcoming for residents.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? I believe that Chanhassen's charm is based in the intimate relationships we build with neighbors and businesses. As we expand the ability to move into the city, it's important that we support efforts to increase opportunities for engagement, such as during city wide celebrations and through organizations like the local Community of Belonging.

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? Cities and residents have needs that must be met, and projects that can make their lives significantly better. We have to balance that with the available budgets, which means prioritizing certain projects. Our city's aging infrastructure is a priority we must keep in mind so that we can live and thrive on good foundations, as are plans to improve housing accessibility.

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? I believe that we need to evaluate zoning whenever new developments are being considered. Options include allowing

medium density, high density, and mixed-use developments, creating incentives for developers to build affordable housing, and converting vacant buildings into housing. It's important to remember that City employees are also a large part of our workforce, and they deserve the option to live where they work.

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? The most cost-effective option for improving activities is for Chanhassen to support existing programs and businesses in the area so that the needs of a vibrant community are met. I personally love shopping at the Farmer's Market, spending time at Community of Belonging's events and enjoying our beautiful parks. Some of these programs can benefit from more widespread recognition, and some might benefit from a small amount of funding, and some might benefit by learning about the resources available to them from the city.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the city do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? There is already interest in our community due to the naming of Chanhassen as the best place to live in the United States in 2021. It's important that applications for business permits be streamlined and simplified, and easier to access. We can possibly offer special incentives for the types of businesses we hope to attract, as well as support resources such as training programs and feedback opportunities for businesses.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? Though I've lived here since 2010, I am newly involved in city processes. It was an intimidating task to learn how to be involved and how to access city documentation. I believe that it is the council's role to invite residents to council meetings and commission, and to make finding the information to be discussed in future meetings more accessible online.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? I dream of a more inclusive, vibrant Chanhassen as soon as the next few years. I see the plans of our city's Strategic Plan for a "Community for a Lifetime," and it is my goal to bring that to fruition. I envision a city that will support residents in all walks of life, and give them the opportunity to thrive. More concretely, I hope to see a community center, housing and recreation options that meet resident needs, with continued growth in local businesses to meet the needs of the growing population.

"I dream of a more inclusive, vibrant Chanhassen as soon as the next few years. I see the plans of our city's Strategic Plan for a 'Community for a Lifetime,' and it is my goal to bring that to fruition."

-- Nora Nashawaty



Chanhassen City Council At-Large Candidates

Name: Haley Pemrick Schubert

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Home community and how long have you lived in your community: I was born and raised in Chanhassen, moved back after college, and bought my first house in Chanhassen 13 years ago.

Previous leadership experience: Membership chair, 4th of July Parade Chair in the Chanhassen Rotary Club for multiple years; Founding member, secretary and president of the Chanhassen Evening Rotary Club; volunteer lead and admissions lead for Wings of the North's annual Air Expo for 10 years.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? I have been a Rotarian in Chanhassen for 15 years. Through that service, I've held multiple leadership roles as well as being a STRIVE mentor at Chanhassen High School. Before being elected to Chanhassen City Council, I served two years on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: My service on the Parks and Recreation commission, before running for City Council in 2020, helped me learn more how the city works and part of the budget process. Over the last four years serving on the City Council, I have learned even more what all this job entails.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the city and how would you address these?

1. Supporting First Responders' needs to best serve our city. Our community population has grown significantly and is also aging, which leads to more calls for service to our Fire and Sheriff's departments. We need to stay on top of staffing and equipment needs to ensure the level of service to the community does not suffer.
2. Financial responsibility. Inflation is hurting everyone and the city's budget should reflect changes that are necessary to maintaining the level of service our residents have come to expect without creating undue burden on residents or businesses.
4. Updating the strategic plan that staff and council use to stay focused and drive decision making. As a "Community for Life," I like to ensure that mantra is part of all decisions made. Continued focus on strategic growth and innovation is critical to keeping Chanhassen a desirable city for both residential and commercial growth and stability.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? I am a lifelong resident of Chanhassen and have watched this community grow from farms and a very small downtown to what it is today. I have seen things that have both helped and hurt the community. I also have been active in this community my entire adult life through service and leadership in both Rotary Clubs as well as time serving on the Park and Rec Commission. I am a leader at a manufacturing company in Chanhassen, which lends me to have both a resident and business view in my decision making. Working in manufacturing also requires a unique lens for creative cost cutting, driving efficiencies, and reducing waste, which has helped me with discussions and decision making the last four years on City Council.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character



Haley Pemrick Schubert

of the city? Chanhassen is in a fun position now as we still have new growth and development as we build out the remaining land available and, at the same time, are starting to move toward re-development of other areas. We are lucky to have so many unique restaurants and small businesses here. With the re-development occurring downtown, we are focusing on making the city more walking friendly and ensuring we have spaces for more retail and restaurants on ground level to help promote that. The new civic campus will also create a centralized meeting location for residents of all ages to gather and grow the sense of community through an accessible playground and splashpad for kids, performance space for summer concerts for all ages, summer farmer's market, winter skating, a new senior center, and pickleball courts.

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? Part of what makes Chanhassen a desirable place to live is the safety of our neighborhoods, the cleanliness of our city, and the beautiful neighborhood and local parks we have throughout. We strive to strategically finance those services and amenities at a level the residents have come to expect while still being fiscally responsible. All capital and department budgets plan five years out and we look at how best to prioritize all spending across a wider time frame instead of each year as it comes to help balance and keep the budget steadier and prevent big swings one way or another from year to year. We have even started to look out past five years to stay ahead of any potential surprises to the budget.

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? This is a question that comes up regularly. A few years ago, we approved TIF funding for a new senior apartment in Chanhassen that required a percentage of the building to be affordable housing for seniors. Carver County has been working on this issue as well and will be meeting with the city in the next few months to give an update on what they're seeing and doing. I want to look at zoning and remaining open properties to see where it would make most sense to include more affordable housing. Another

thing I'd like to see the city do is amend code for people to add on to their current housing to add "mother-in-law suites" for aging family members to still have some independence but live with their families to get the care and help they need.

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation and parks? With the addition of the economic development manager to city staff, I feel the city is doing a lot currently to help potential new businesses come to the city. The re-development of the Country Inn & Suites and the old movie theater will provide more rentable space for shopping and dining. Our Parks and Recreation Department are also very involved and consistently looking for feedback on programming from residents as well as through the Park and Recreation Commission. They also have a plan and continuously monitor the condition of neighborhood and community parks and have a rotation of when equipment needs repair and replacement.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the city do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? A competitive business environment is very important to me. We have a variety of retail, commercial, manufacturing and headquartered businesses in this community which makes us unique compared to a lot of our neighbors. The City Council has made it a priority over the last few years to look at even more ways of being even more business friendly. Most recently, we dove into and adjusted SAC/WAC fees to help lessen the burden of new businesses trying to open in our community. Also, the city hired an economic development manager who has been actively working with potential businesses and existing businesses. On top of these, our Economic Development Commission has been active in finding more ways to attract a variety of businesses to the community.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? I believe the city has been making strides to increase transparency the last few years through hiring a communications manager and updating the website to be more navigable. Residents are able to sign up for email updates for any active projects happening in the city, the "Chan-happenings" weekly email, the Mayor's message, etc. Losing the Villager has caused us to have more conversations on what else can be done. Discussions on including message boards at the Senior Center, Library, and Rec Center have been discussed as well. We continue to take resident feedback and re-evaluate communication strategies regularly to continue to increase transparency.

Where do you envision the City in the next five to 10 years? In the next five to 10 years, I expect the city to have a more resident friendly and active downtown area. I have seen more people at a higher frequency in the last year engaging at City Council meetings since the loss of the Villager. I'd like to see a more active and engaged citizenry across the board to create a greater feel of community and living out being a "Community for Life." Having lived here my whole life, even with all the change, I am excited to live out this mantra and raise my children here to have the same passion for this community and serving it. I also envision improved strategy when it comes to infrastructure maintenance and replacement as that continues to evolve as it's been a focus of conversation.



Chanhassen City Council At-Large Candidates

Name: Andrew E Soudbash

Email address: Andrew.soudbash@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Chanhassen is my hometown! Lived here all my life live many.

Previous leadership experience: none

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? BSA, Environmental advocacy clubs.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: By allocating both time and resources to be able to listen and champion every citizen of Chanhassen!

What do you view as the three top priorities for the city and how would you address these? Honestly, there are so many ideas for improving our city brought to me by the residents of Chanhassen every day that it's impossible to choose just three. There is obvious Fiscal spending, mass deforestation, and a lack of safe bike trails. But what I think is most important right now for Chanhassen to grow as a city is not what I can bring to the table but what we all can. For too many years we have had a glaring lack of communication between the citizens of Chanhassen and the actual council members supposed to represent them. My main goal which I believe is more important than all others right now is communication between the citizens and the members elected. After all the only reason they were elected in the first place was to help you the citizens not themselves by injecting their personal agendas and priorities.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? Let me start by saying as someone who has been working in education for the last few years, I have learned many lessons when it comes to prioritizing not only the needs of a few but also the needs of the group as a whole. If you focus on one small issue or one child, the rest of the class will suffer finding that balance where you can help everyone shine to their fullest. That is what I want to bring into the chambers here in Chanhassen. On top of this, I feel it's important to note that I am significantly younger than not only the other candidates but also the other members of the council, this age difference can provide valuable insight into future generations required for future development in town.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? This has been a significant issue I have been hearing over the last few years as Chanhassen has started to modernize, many people have been saying Chanhassen, over the previous few years, no longer feels quite like it used to. To me, Chanhassen has always been a safe place to walk around and visit family-owned businesses where you can walk in and talk to the owner who has worked there for 30 years. Because of this, I plan to prioritize the growth of local businesses over corporate ones.

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? This has been on my mind for many months now I feel improving fiscal spending and making sure we



Andrew Soudbash

build assets that are both visually stunning and last the test of time lowering upkeep reducing overall expenditures in the long run.

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? As someone who works in the education field, I can respect wanting to improve living conditions for teachers and entice apartment companies to move into Chanhassen. however, once again, I want to give local businesses a chance first and foremost, and most important I want the housing to be affordable. now if this means we need to build these in locations that have cheaper taxation policies to reduce overall cost, this might be something we can all talk about as a city if it's something we wish to move forward on.

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? As someone who grew up riding the trails and bike paths of Chanhassen and Excelsior, I can say Chanhassen might need some improvement. We have always been a great city for entertainment outdoors through parks and walking trails. however, lately, people have been asking for more bike trails, and possible bike lanes on roads to reduce the number of bike-related accidents over the past few years. Other than this I think keeping and maintaining our many parks for the youth of Chanhassen to enjoy as they grow is important for childhood development and by installing more paths for biking we only continue to improve the development of our youth as the years continue.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the city do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow?

As I have stated in the past I believe giving Chanhassen residents the chance to grow their

dream businesses is more important than corporate ones.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? So, this is the main point of my campaign. Anyone, if they want, can go onto the Chanhassen website and see what the council is up to. however, what I am asking is as follows, is the council doing what the residents want? Well like many over the last few years you may have felt like there's all this transparency but it's all one-sided. it's like listening to a radio broadcast when it should be more like a conversation. That is my promise to the residents of Chanhassen, to bring your voice back to the council chamber, bring the issues you want to be solved to light, and keep the chambers a place for everyone to be a part of. After all, it is our job as council members to work for you the people.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? I hope that in five years this city will be a beacon across Minnesota as the city that isn't to their people and through this we will not only be re-awarded the best city to live in the US but we will also feel like it too. I hope that one day the lessons and groundwork we leave behind over the next four years will set a precedent for all future council members and the mayor in Chanhassen for not only 5-10 years but for the next 100 years. And in doing so inspire future generations to not only vote, but stand up for what they believe in. With this, I hope to count on your vote come November. Have a wonderful fall and see you on election day folks!

“... as someone who has been working in education for the last few years, I have learned many lessons when it comes to prioritizing not only the needs of a few but also the needs of the group as a whole. If you focus on one small issue or one child, the rest of the class will suffer finding that balance where you can help everyone shine to their fullest. That is what I want to bring into the chambers here in Chanhassen.”

-- Andrew Soudbash



Chaska Mayoral Candidates

Name: Taylor Hubbard

Website: www.taylor4chaska.org

Email address: taylor4chaska@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: My community is Chaska, and I've lived here for the past 20 years with my husband, Martin, and son, Ethan.

Previous leadership experience: For the past five years, I have served as the Ward 2 representative on Chaska City Council and Economic Development Commission. I am an appointed trustee for the Chaska Fire Relief Association, overseeing the pension plan for Chaska firefighters. I was a liaison on the Chaska Community Center and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan community task forces. Prior to joining the council, I served as vice chair of the Chaska Human Rights Commission from 2008 to 2014. I have also served on a Photography Association board of directors, serving as the organization's president in 2011. I was an advisory board member for the Professional Photography Department at Hennepin Technical College.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Chaska's Christmas in May organization; Chaska Police Department's Heros & Helpers; Carver County food distribution drives; Chaska's Communities of Belonging group; Chaska Friends of the Library; Chamber of Commerce member; Rotary Club.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: As a current Chaska council member, I have a comprehensive understanding of the city's operations, planning and budgeting processes. Prior to the council, the Chaska Human Rights Commission gave me an opportunity to engage with our community. I own/operate a successful storefront business for the past 14 years. Business ownership has given me extensive experience in financial planning, operations, promotional marketing, customer service and employee relations. I am deeply committed to lifting the voices of all Chaska residents to shape a community they desire by intentionally listening, learning and engaging. As mayor, I will work tirelessly for the benefit of our community.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the City, and how would you address these?

1. Drive smart residential, commercial and industrial growth. Communities thrive when they have an effective balance of these sectors as they provide jobs, available housing and retail options. As taxpayers, we all benefit from strategic growth through the generation of additional tax revenue, which helps to alleviate the financial burden on existing taxpayers.
2. Revitalization of our historic downtown. Community members have expressed support for our existing businesses and a desire for additional dining and retail experiences. Our local businesses are an integral part of our success as they provide job opportunities and cultural vibrancy. As a city, we need to actively attract new businesses and support existing ones by offering grant/loan opportunities and to collaborate with our economic organizations, including the Southwest Metro Chamber and Chaska Downtown Business Alliance.
3. Reinvestment in our city facilities. Residents rely on well-kept streets, dependable utilities, and responsive public safety services; all of which depend on the adequacy of our facilities. Many of our current facilities were built when Chaska's population was around 10,000. And now, with nearly 30,000 residents, these services are struggling to support the increased demands of our community. To ensure we continue to provide efficient services and accommodate future growth, it is crucial to invest in updating and expanding our facilities.



Taylor Hubbard

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? Serving as a city councilmember for the past five years has provided me with a understanding of the city's planning procedures, budgetary practices, and departmental operations to make informed and thoughtful decisions on behalf of the community. Furthermore, my unique perspective as a small business owner, wife and mother lends a collaborative approach in the important decisions that impact and benefit the growth of our community.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the City? Chaska's identity is rooted in its mission to be "The Best Small Town in Minnesota." We achieve this through effective planning and zoning of physical infrastructure, like buildings and developments, as well as by cultivating a vibrant community with social amenities that engage and enrich our diverse community. While population size is a factor, what truly matters is the sense of belonging and connection within the community.

What is your approach to managing the City's budget and fiscal priorities? The city holds an annual planning session where both the council and city staff come together to review and establish strategic goals for the community. This collaborative event has led to transformative improvements, contributing to what makes Chaska an exceptional place to live. Our annual budget reflects these priorities and is extensively reviewed by the council. I believe that maintaining a fiscally responsible budget is being a good steward of taxpayer money while ensuring the city remains financially solvent and capable of meeting the needs of its residents.

What measures, if any, should the City pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, and healthcare workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? It should be our priority to continue providing affordable housing. As our community continues to grow, the city should strategically partner with land developers to create mixed-density neighborhood developments. Existing residents often communicate their desire to remain in Chaska as their family grows or downsizes. Providing a

multitude of housing options, will accommodate those needs and provide available housing options for incoming new residents. I also believe the City should encourage economic development that provides living wages to their employees so they have the ability to reside within the same community as their employment. In doing so, they will create dynamic communities that thrive.

What, if anything, should the City do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? The city plays a vital role in developing the infrastructure and fostering a community environment. Projects like the reconstruction of Highway 41 through downtown are designed to create a safer, more walkable and retail-friendly environment. Redevelopment initiatives, such as City Square West, will transform the heart of downtown Chaska into a regional tourism destination. We need our local chamber to organize more Chaska-focused retail events and establish a dedicated local tourism bureau. Chaska is set to host several prestigious national sporting events in the coming years, which will draw spectators from around the world. It is essential to promote our local businesses and position Chaska as a premier tourism destination as these events offer a valuable opportunity to boost our local economy.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the City do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? The council has introduced several effective grant programs and low-interest loans to support both new and established businesses in the downtown corridor. These initiatives provide funds to invest in business facades and help cover upfront utility costs. Additionally, economic tools such as tax increment financing (TIF), tax abatement, Chaska's energy rebate programs, and various county/state programs are available on a case-by-case basis. I believe the city could further enhance its support by implementing a matching grant program specifically for start-up businesses to aid in the unique vibrancy they bring to our community.

What, if anything, should the City do to increase transparency? Transparency is achieved by clear communication and consistent standard operating procedures. Utilizing a range of communication methods such as print, digital and in-person will effectively reach our diverse community. Communication channels need to deliver essential information, such as upcoming development projects. In the absence of a local newspaper, distributing a printed quarterly newsletter to every home will ensure accurate updates and boost community engagement. Technology could further enhance our ability to address city issues quickly and gather real-time community feedback. Lastly, it is crucial for city employees and the council to remain actively involved within the community. Attending events, visiting businesses, and engaging with residents are essential for maintaining strong connections and upholding the City's hometown feel.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? I envision a bright future for Chaska over the next decade. Our community will approach full population, with the last areas of open development being completed. Downtown will thrive with dynamic economic growth, offering residents ample opportunities to shop, work and enjoy recreational activities. City facilities — including the public safety campus, municipal service building, library, and city hall — will be fully operational, effectively serving our community's needs. Throughout this growth, our core community values will remain steadfast, ensuring that Chaska continues to be a welcoming hometown for everyone.



Chaska Mayoral Candidates

Name: George John Glaros, Jr.

Website: www.glarosmayorchaska.com

Email address: george@glarosmayorchaska.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Born and raised in Youngstown, Ohio, and have been a resident of Minnesota since 2005; Chaska since 2008.

Previous leadership experience: I am currently the operations manager for Carrier Corporation's branch in the Twin Cities. I have over 30 years of executive management experience in the high-technology and construction business sector. I have also been an adjunct college professor for the past 27 years, teaching in the area of business and accounting.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Chaska Rotary, Minnesota High Tech Association (ACE Leadership Program), Junior Achievement Business Mentor of the Year, Volunteer youth baseball coach, just to name a few.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: Through my career progression, I have been blessed with experience and training to achieve results through organizational transformation and the development of exceptional teams. I welcome you to visit my LinkedIn site at www.linkedin.com/in/georgeglaros/

What do you view as the three top priorities for the City, and how would you address these?

1. To promote economic development and livability, we must invest in broadening the tax base for ALL city residents and lowering overall taxation.
2. Public service, safety and the community's general well-being.
3. Investing in critical infrastructure and maintenance.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? I have held corporate leadership positions for my entire career. I bring a different perspective and results-oriented approach to leadership. I would focus on creating a solid and sustainable vision for all stakeholders. Most importantly, I am not an insider, and I promise to bring a fresh and pragmatic approach to leading Chaska.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? Chaska has always been about community, but we are outspending our citizens' ability to fund programs without priority. The city has a lot of character; what it needs is Priority/Target-Based Budgeting and Program Reviews to ensure money is being spent appropriately.

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? The city needs to focus on developing a new sustainable long-range city plan; focusing on diversifying revenue streams (especially energy and commercial expansion), which will result in long-term income and sustainability.



George John Glaros

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, and healthcare workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? Make no mistake: Large tax increases hurt fixed- and low-income individuals the most. The city needs to stop these massive increases by sponsoring programs to create lasting affordable housing for these families and build equity in their homes, much like land trusts and limited-equity cooperatives.

What, if anything, should the City do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? We have done a great job with parks! However, the city must attract additional shopping and dining for long-term survival. A long-range plan must include more robust development assistance, investing in a business incubator, marketing and renting open spaces, sponsoring business development projects, and seeking relationships with developers, corporations and investment bankers.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the City do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? The current Chaska Municipal Code has far too many restrictive covenants restricting permitted business practices in various areas. These need to be modernized and reduced to give businesses greater latitude in drawing customers. In addition, the city needs to find creative ways to support the collective success of city businesses.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? Transparency isn't just optics; it's about trust. Our form of government is based on popular sovereignty, the notion that ultimate authority and power reside with the people. Our residents must feel empowered and

informed, which must be reflected in the decisions of the city government. Immediate actional items I would work towards transparency would include:

- a. Increased input and discussion methods for citizen feedback.
- b. More open "Town Hall" meetings across the city are needed.
- c. Being an accessible mayor by holding multiple Town Halls monthly.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? I am running for mayor to ensure that Chaska is an economically strong, diverse and growing city that will remain sustainable into the next several decades.

"I have held corporate leadership positions for my entire career. I bring a different perspective and results-oriented approach to leadership. I would focus on creating a solid and sustainable vision for all stakeholders. Most importantly, I am not an insider, and I promise to bring a fresh and pragmatic approach to leading Chaska."

-- George Glaros

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Chaska City Council Candidates

Ward 2

Name: Josh Benesh

Website: Facebook: joshbeneshforchaska

Email address: joshbeneshforchaska@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Chaska, MN for 6 years

Previous leadership experience: Currently a Battalion Chief with Hennepin EMS Communications division

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Served communities as an EMT, Firefighter and Paramedic outside of Chaska.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I believe my experiences as a Battalion Chief will help me serve as a leader for the community.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the City and how would you address these?

1. Managing growth responsibly, and equitably. As growth is imminent, we want to make sure that the challenges associated with it are done responsibly, over all parts of our community.
2. Keeping our city infrastructure up to date by maintaining and updating facilities as necessary and listening to the people of Chaska for what their needs are.
3. Being a leader in the state of Minnesota when it comes to fiscal policies, managing our expectations, and being a place where people want to live and work.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? I am running unopposed. But my drive to learn and be a leader, along with my past experiences as a leader would differentiate me from others.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? While Chaska is the “Best Small Town in Minnesota,” we must recognize that we are growing and becoming more diverse – which will continue to help Chaska be just that. We need to have the resources necessary to be there for all our citizens and anticipate what people’s needs will be. We also need to maintain and upkeep those resources for our current citizens to continue to recognize Chaska for what it is, but also what it can be.



Josh Benesh

What is your approach to managing the city’s budget and fiscal priorities? I plan on listening to the citizens, advisors, and experienced professionals who also have the best intentions for our city.

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? We’ve done a good job in adding affordable housing options for people, but we need to look at the impact of those options, and the impact of future needs. The population as a whole is aging, and we need to maintain reasonable options for people to live. We also want to remain an attractive destination for people in those professions among others.

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? I think we need to look at all options here, and not rule out any possibilities. Chaska has some great things to do, places to go and shop, and explore the city – but with growth comes the need for

more of these things, as well as modernizing them and the city as well.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the city do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? I believe we need to look at the financial obligations of businesses that exist and want to exist in Chaska first, as that can be a barrier. We also need to look at space, and the quality of current spaces, as well as make sure new business growth can occur.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? I believe having open meetings is a great start – which we have. I think our leaders can be more vocal on social media as well, since a great amount of people get their information in that way.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? I see Chaska as a destination exurb for people to live, work and raise a family in. I also see us being a prime place for new business growth, and a place where people want to travel to, to do their business.

“While Chaska is the ‘Best Small Town in Minnesota,’ we must recognize that we are growing and becoming more diverse – which will continue to help Chaska be just that. We need to have the resources necessary to be there for all our citizens and anticipate what people’s needs will be.”

-- Josh Benesh



Chaska City Council Candidates

Leah Sheveland candidate for Chaska City Council, running unopposed in Ward 4. She did not return responses to our questionnaire.





Victoria Mayoral Candidate

Name: Deb McMillan

Website: www.facebook.com/debforvictoria

Email address: debforvictoria@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Victoria, Minnesota. We have lived here for 38 years.

Previous leadership experience: Elected to Victoria City Council in 2018; elected mayor in 2020. Business owner since 2020. My professional experience includes executive director for several local chambers of commerce, with experience in government affairs, lobbying and workforce issues. I have also served on a number of volunteer boards.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? I have held leadership positions on a number of volunteer boards, am active in our church community, and the Minnesota business community.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: My professional work experience has provided me the experience and skills to serve as an elected official.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the City and how would you address these?

1. Development: Victoria is a growing community and developing quickly. It is important that we develop the city thoughtfully with respect to the landowners and their wishes, the market and community needs.
2. Transportation: Along with a rapidly developing community comes challenges with the transportation system. Highway 5 traffic far exceeds its safe capacity, and I am committed to continuing to advocate for funding and partnerships needed to expand the highway.
3. Diversified Tax Base: Much of the tax base in the city relies on homeowners' property taxes. An intentional effort to diversify the tax base and attract business to Victoria is underway.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? My experience on the council for the past six years and my knowledge and understanding of issues impacting Victoria residents helps inform my decisions.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? Victoria has a solid comprehensive plan in place and re-visits it every 10 years to ensure it is still accurate and still reflects the priorities of the community.

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? In a growing city, there are many competing interests for taxpayer dollars. I appreciate the long-term planning that Victoria embraces and has for many years. This roadmap helps us plan for the inevitable expenses that come with building and maintaining city infrastructure and providing services. This approach has helped to flatten any big spikes/surprises for taxpayers.

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police



Deb McMillan

officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? Because of the high prices of land, labor and building materials, this is a hard nut to crack, but it is top of mind for the council and we continually seek opportunities to help close the gap. Victoria works closely with housing developers and has a good partnership with the Carver County CDA to seek opportunities to create housing that meets affordable criteria. Additionally, Victoria is committed to maintaining our existing housing stock that is considered naturally occurring affordable housing.

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? Victoria employs a community development professional on staff who is in constant contact with the development community. Those relationships are important as we identify needs for the community. Additionally, it is important for the city to have a good reputation among developers as being a community that is desirable and fair. The city engages residents in a number of ways to get their thoughts on emerging issues including hosting surveys, being in attendance at community events, and reaching out personally. Our advisory committees are critical to decision-making and we depend on them to provide perspective.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the City do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? We are in contact with the business community and I hope businesses view the city as approachable and easy to work with and open to ideas. We strive to strike a balance that serves current businesses and welcomes new business to the community.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? Victoria government is very transparent. Every workshop and City Council meeting is open and recorded so residents can attend in person or view videos of council meetings. Additionally, city staff and council are responsive to resident questions and encourage resident feedback regularly on a number of issues the council is working on. Our recent park survey is a great example and city staff can be found at most community events, engaging with attendees.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? In the next five to 10 years, I see the Downtown West parcel being built out and a beautiful extension of Victoria's current downtown, with the same vibrant charm and popularity that exists downtown today. The South growth commercial area will have businesses that provide needed services to residents and help offset tax rates for homeowners.

“In the next five to 10 years, I see the Downtown West parcel being built out and a beautiful extension of Victoria's current downtown, with the same vibrant charm and popularity that exists downtown today. The South growth commercial area will have businesses that provide needed services to residents and help offset tax rates for homeowners.”

-- Deb McMillan

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Name: Christian Pederson

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/cp4victoria>; TheBulldogCompanies.com (business)

Email address: cp@thebulldogcompanies.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Victoria, Minnesota, 21+ years

Previous leadership experience: Founder and CEO of The Bulldog Companies for the past 15+ years; Planning Commissioner; Park Board Administrator; vice president, treasurer, board member of the Savanna Valley Homeowners Association; executive management of countless business accounts in the IT solutions and services industry.

In what community, state or national organizations have you been involved? Victoria Planning Commission; Victoria Park and Recreation Committee; Savanna Valley Homeowners Association; NextDoor Community Lead and Administrator; Twin Cities Quality Assurance Association; Twin Cities Rational User Group; Minnetonka School District; Tonka United Soccer; Adam Arthur Cooke Memorial Scholarship Fund.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I've lived in Victoria for over 21 years, where my wife and I raised our three daughters and three dogs. I began volunteering almost immediately after moving to our community, serving on our neighborhood HOA board, the City's Parks & Recreation Committee, and the Planning Commission. I graduated from the first Victoria Citizens Academy, which deepened my understanding of city operations. As vice-chair and commissioner-at-large on the Parks & Recreation Committee, and in my roles on the Planning Commission, I've engaged with various community topics, from parks programs to infrastructure; from stormwater pond maintenance, to trails and everything in between. I've advised the City Council on zoning, ordinances and regulations, contributed to the design and development of Wasserman Lake Preserve, and collaborated with partners including Carver County and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. I was actively involved in the development of the city's 2040 comprehensive plan, and the city's three-year strategic plans. All these experiences have helped build a foundation of knowledge and insight and have prepared me to help shape our Victoria's future.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the city and how would you address these?

1. Highway 5 Improvements. With Highway 5 and related projects, effective communication and minimizing disruption are critical. As a councilmember, I'll collaborate with partners to find alternative funding to reduce costs, and provide regular updates so you know what's happening, when and where. I will encourage events that continue to attract visitors to downtown.

2. New Victoria Fire Station. Our fire station is over 40 years old. I support building a new one to improve readiness and emergency response for our growing community. I'll ensure smart design decisions for long-term value and functionality, ensuring the building can function for



Christian Pederson

the next 40+ years.

3. Smart Growth. With my experience on the Victoria Parks & Recreation Committee and Planning Commission, I'll employ thoughtful expansion of residential and commercial opportunities based on community feedback. I'll strive to preserve what makes Victoria appealing and support projects the community wants, like a grocery store. I'll also ensure that we continue to make progress connecting trail gaps, adding parking downtown.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? My experience and connections. For more than 15 years, I have volunteered my time and talents in Victoria including Parks & Recreation Committee and Planning Commission. I support our community by attending events, participating in programs, volunteering and frequently visiting our many businesses. I have lived in two other communities and have witnessed how those cities operated and grew, and my experience in leadership roles in multinational organizations and running my own start-up have given me valuable insights into growth, operations and business challenges.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? This is the big challenge. I will carefully engage in all stages of development — sketch, preliminary and final plats — while adhering to our comprehensive plan and ordinances such as zoning, building, lighting, signage, shoreland and tree preservation. The comprehensive plan and ordinances were all created with extensive input from residents and businesses and serve as our roadmap for growth.

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? As we continue to grow, we need to find ways to capture the new tax base and make wise investments. I would like to explore how we can best invest fees we receive for park dedication. I favor using different tools to attract the types of development that the community wants and would also allow for taxbase expansion and shift the property tax burden from our existing taxpayers. I support a practical budgeting approach: keeping costs low, minimizing risk, maintaining assets, funding sensible programs, and extend-

ing the life of capital investments.

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? Strong communities have an array of housing options at different price points. I have participated in several joint meetings with Carver County affordable housing representatives and surrounding communities. Unfortunately, Victoria does not fit many of the criteria to receive funding support to build more affordable housing. However, that does not mean that we cannot try to create more lower entry-point subdivisions that fit within our community. Our southern growth district is a great opportunity for this, and we're already exploring with developers how to build more affordable housing options in this area.

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? As the City of Lakes & Parks, Victoria should offer diverse recreational amenities. From my time on the Parks & Recreation Committee, I've heard that the community wants more pickleball courts, a community pool and splash pad, an off-leash dog park, and destination-style parks. I also want to ensure we're actively addressing city trail gaps to make better connections with state, regional and local trails.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the city do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? Victoria is a business-friendly community. As a business owner myself, I recognize that the costs of entry are low and our process for initiating growth is streamlined, especially compared to other communities. Victoria's zoning codes and ordinances are fair and prioritize safety and protection of our natural landscapes. The use of tools and financial incentives should be preserved for attracting the types of development the community desires. Developing long-term plans helps us grow and will pay for growth. Community events such as the classic car shows, Light Up Victoria, Volksfest, and farmers markets bring visitors to Victoria, promote our local businesses and encourage spending in our community. There are always opportunities for further expansion of events -- perhaps become "Cheeseburger Town USA."

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? Transparency builds trust. While the city has done a great job sharing information, there is always room for improvement. Social media and the city website are a great way to share information but doesn't always promote two-way engagement. We need to seek more opportunities to engage community members before decisions are made and make it easier for people to know what's happening and provide feedback and input.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? Growing! Victoria is great place to live and raise a family. We want to also make it a great place to work and retire. As Victoria continues to grow and evolve, I want to help shape our community's future based on your input and feedback and create a Victoria that other communities aspire to become.



Name: Chad Roberts

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Email address: cjr690@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Victoria, Minnesota, 9 years.

Previous leadership experience: I have served on the Victoria City Council for the last four years.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? ALAMN

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I try to be a well-rounded individual who is active in the community, visiting many local businesses, and also spending time coaching youth sports. I believe we are always learning and growing. I went to school to be a teacher and coach before deciding on going to paralegal school. My background in education and profession working in the Risk Management department of law firm has given me a unique ability to understand complex issues.

What do you view as the three top priorities for the city and how would you address these?

1. Fiscal responsibility. Improving Highway 5 to ease congestion and building a new fire station are crucial investments. To balance this, we must keep operating costs low through efficiency, partnerships, innovation and smart uses of our resources. We will continue to work hard to keep our AAA rating.
2. Smart Growth. As a growing community, I want Victoria to maintain its small-town charm. I will continue to listen to the needs of our residents and advocate for development that aligns with our communities' priorities. My goal is to be strategic about new homes and businesses to maintain our character. We should also not be afraid to use every tool in our toolbox for the right project, including using TIF.
3. Community-centric space. As a current councilmember, one thing I hear a lot is we need more places to gather, whether it's destination parks or more indoor gather spaces for the winter. I support seeking opportunities like public/private partnerships to achieve this.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? As a current councilmember, I work hard to earn your trust and respect. I listen and do my best to respond and share where I stand on issues and why. We've attracted new businesses, including Kwik Trip, which will start building in late 2025. We've also enhanced public safety, increased community events like winter lighting, and invested in road improvements to boost safety and reduce congestion. I'll keep listening and working for all Victoria residents.

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? Many of our residents want to see our community grow and add more commercial spaces, such as a grocery store, pharmacy, retail, etc. However, those businesses continue to tell us we need more people before they will



Chad Roberts

come. To attract those businesses, we must continue to build more houses and apartments. However, we must be strategic on how and where we do this. I want Victoria to keep its small-town charm while also attracting the type of development our community wants.

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? We have an amazing staff that helps us through this process. The dedication and hard work by our staff are exemplified in the city's "AAA" bond rating. This is no small feat and very few cities receive this honor. As a councilmember, I work hard to ensure your property taxes are well managed and the services you receive for this investment are a good value. I support funding for key community needs like public safety, clean water, safe roads and parks. Maintaining our "AAA" bond rating helps us secure low-interest loans, while keeping your property taxes lower.

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? Victoria is a very desirable community which means land and home prices are often higher. We don't have to accept every development proposal, and don't, but we need a mix of housing options to attract desired amenities like grocery stores and medical facilities. This year, the city has heard from two developers regarding affordable housing. We will continue to work with those developers and our local, state and federal agencies to help bring more affordable housing to Victoria. It is a complex issue, but I am committed to finding solutions

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? Whatever we can! The council has already been

working hard to add more amenities for our city. Listening to our residents and working to attract the type of amenities our community wants is very important to me. I will continue to look for creative ways to add the amenities our residents want. We also have opportunities now to shape how our Downtown West and southern growth areas will develop.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the City do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow? We can attract desired businesses and support current ones with effective communication. I have built strong relationships with businesses to understand and meet their needs. We all want what's best for the city, we might just have different ideas on how to get there. As a councilmember, I work to align the city's and our business's goals, while considering our residents' interests as well.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? Transparency builds trust. Regular communication through various channels is essential. However, there is always room for improvement. We have lost our local newspapers and many people, especially our seniors, don't follow social media or use/have the internet. I am committed to exploring different ways to reach those not online. As a councilmember, I pride myself on replying as much as I can to every email or call I receive. We may not always agree, and people may not always like what my opinion is, however, they can count on me to listen and return their email or call, so at least they know where I stand on the issue.

Where do you envision the City in the next five to 10 years? I envision our western development thriving with new restaurants and businesses; a walkable downtown/downtown west for community gatherings; a vibrant southern area with larger businesses like Kwik Trip and affordable housing. I envision safer roads and reduced congestion. Mostly, I see Victoria retaining its small-town charm and continuing to be a place where people want to come to enjoy the city, play and raise a family.

“As a current councilmember, I work hard to earn your trust and respect. I listen and do my best to respond and share where I stand on issues and why. We've attracted new businesses, including Kwik Trip, which will start building in late 2025. We've also enhanced public safety, increased community events like winter lighting, and invested in road improvements to boost safety and reduce congestion.”

-- Chad Roberts



Name: Cam Wright

Email address: Camwright1122@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Victoria, 12 years

Previous leadership experience: Father/husband, business owner, HOA vice president, Victoria Parks & Rec Committee

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Victoria Crime Prevention Fund (501c3); Power Squadron.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I'm currently on the Victoria Parks & Rec committee. My love for the community of Victoria shines through every day as I talk with my fellow community members and neighbors about what they would like the VISION for Victoria to be!

What do you view as the three top priorities for the city and how would you address these?

1. Downtown Parking
2. Hwy 5 project
3. Community amenities

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? I am 100% the voice of the Victoria community. I'm here to make sure everyone's voices are heard about what they want Victoria to look like. Together we will create the "Wright Vision for Victoria!"

How would you plan to balance growth and development while maintaining the character of the city? Victoria is the queen of Carver County. We are the city of parks and lakes. We need to make sure we are using those tools to continue to keep our downtown area fun, lively, unique and not be followers. I want Victoria to be the best place in Minnesota to live! With the support of the community and the Wright vision we can make it happen. Major growth to Victoria is going to happen. South Victoria is an area I believe can help us accomplish growth opportunities without sacrifices being made to the downtown areas.

What is your approach to managing the city's budget and fiscal priorities? First, we need to question and understand the cost of the Highway 5 project. Can the city maintain their



Cam Wright

current assets? Are we spending all our money on Highway 5 versus the residents current investments? (E.g. -- Rec Center). I will find out and be transparent with the community!

What measures, if any, should the city pursue to create more affordable housing for the workforce (including young teachers, police officers, health-care workers) and for seniors on limited incomes? This is a tricky topic. Victoria is a highly sought out community to live in which makes our land value very high. I once again believe we can accomplish some of those goals with our south Victoria area. I also believe the seniors of our community should be first on the list to be able to afford to live, enjoy Victoria!

What, if anything, should the city do to provide additional or improved activities, shopping, dining, recreation, and parks? This comes down to having the "Wright vision" for Victoria. We have incredible downtown business owners in Victoria and together as a community with a plan that we can accomplish in stages to make sure we keep Victoria the queen of Carver County. Fun, unique, lively, different from any other city surrounding Victoria!

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the city do to remove barriers so that businesses can move into the city and current businesses can grow?

Working closely with the business owners and keeping communication lines open for ideas on how everyone can work together on any issues and help everyone obtain success.

What, if anything, should the city do to increase transparency? More face-to-face community involvement.

Where do you envision the city in the next five to 10 years? I'm going to "keep it Victoria" with our charm and beauty but add some more fun for our community to enjoy with their Family, friends and neighbors! My goal is to not rely on the surrounding communities for their rec centers and outdoor family skating rinks and fields. We shouldn't have to leave Victoria to feel like we're a part of another community. Let's bring community to Victoria and that's the "Wright vision for Victoria!"

"I am 100% the voice of the Victoria community. I'm here to make sure everyone's voices are heard about what they want Victoria to look like. Together we will create the "Wright Vision for Victoria!"."

-- Cam Wright



Name: Lisa Anderson

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Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Chaska for 22 years

Previous leadership experience: 13+ years ECCS School Board, 3+ years Board Chair, 5 years Vice Chair; Negotiation Team 6x; Minnesota School Board Association Board; Association of Metropolitan School Board; Southwest Metro Intermediate School District Board; 30 years as a leadership coach, consultant and facilitator; 10 years operating a leadership consulting firm.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? SouthWest Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce; Chaska and Chanhassen Rotary; Chaska/Chanhassen Hockey Association; Boy Scouts Pack 301 Den Leader; Westwood Community Church VBS/Sunday School Teacher; Miracles of Mitch Foundation Board Member (now Pinky Swear Foundation); Carver County Health Partnership; Chanhassen Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I have prepared for this role by:

- Campaigning for Carver County Commissioner for District 1 in 2022.
- Watching or attending Carver County Board meetings for the past 2½ years.
- Reviewing board materials in addition to the county strategic plan and budget.
- Developing relationships with a variety of county stakeholders, including fellow commissioners, county employees, not-for-profit leaders, and other community leaders.
- Engaging with the community by participating in community organizations and activities as well as canvassing to better understand the concerns of the families of Carver County.

What do you view as the three top priorities for Carver County and how would you address these? As the fastest growing county in Minnesota, Carver County needs leadership to prepare for the anticipated additional 50% growth in the next 10 years. We need to develop a shared vision for this future to:

1. Create efficiencies by taking a hard look at where resources are spent, seeking areas to streamline and ensuring there is a return on investment for taxpayer dollars.
2. Make Carver County an easier place to do business — this will add tax revenue, services and jobs to our community.
3. Prepare for future housing, transportation and infrastructure requirements in partnership with our cities to meet the needs of all residents and families.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? As a business woman, military mom and public servant, I offer a perspective that is not currently represented on the County Board. I have a history of engaging with the community, providing innovative solutions and getting things done. My practical, strategic, results-oriented approach will challenge the status quo, and focus on ensuring Carver County is a great
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Lisa Anderson

place to live, work and play for generations!

How do you plan to manage the county's annual budget while ensuring that essential services are maintained and improved?

Balancing services while stabilizing property taxes should be the highest priority of the Carver County Board. It will take leadership and planning and I would advocate to: Develop a strategic plan to prioritize services; Reallocate the budget based on identified priorities; Create a long-term budget projection that would look beyond the current year to create a tax stabilization plan.

The tax levy to fund the county budget is a major item of the property tax bill. How would you propose to inform and engage residents so they become more involved in issues and informed on how county money is spent?

A simple graphic would support communication of how taxpayer dollars are spent. When I served on the school board, we used a graphic of a dollar bill to communicate the different areas of spending. A visual like this is a simple and effective way to communicate responsible spending of taxpayer dollars. The job of the commissioners is to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. Through my observation of board activities, I believe the budget could be more thoroughly examined to ensure Carver County families are receiving a good return on their investment. There are also opportunities to collaborate with other government entities and organizations to better communicate the value provided to the families of Carver County.

What, if anything, should the county do to provide additional or improved activities, recreation, and parks? Our parks, dog parks and trails are some of the recreational activities that attract families to our community. Recre-

ational activities are critical for mental wellness. A long-term plan, developed in collaboration with the community, will ensure that these amenities are available for our children and grandchildren.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the county do to see that private sector businesses can start and grow in our county? Private sector business fall under the purview of our cities, yet there are opportunities to collaborate to attract businesses that will provide needed services and jobs. It is also time to review and revise county ordinances and policies to make it easier for businesses to work with and operate in Carver County.

What, if anything, should the county do to increase transparency? In my experience as a school board member, we moved from open-door meetings where only board meetings were recorded, to all meetings live streamed and recorded, including the superintendent selection process. This demonstrates my commitment to transparency. I believe taxpayers should have the opportunity to see how their elected officials make decisions. Thus, I would advocate for recording both board meetings and work sessions. Also, up until recently, community members needed to request board materials through the county administrator. All board materials are public information and should be easily accessed. I am pleased to say that through my requests and recommendations, board presentations are now posted on the Carver County website. Additionally, Carver County policies and ordinances should also be posted on the website.

Where do you see the county in the next five to 10 years? My vision is that Carver County will continue to be a destination for families. We will offer a variety of housing solutions for families of all income levels, a vibrant business community that provides desired services and jobs to our families, and a robust park and trail system that offers the recreational opportunities necessary to enhance personal wellness. Now is the time to plan for our future, engage our community, and identify the next generation of leaders to ensure Carver County remains a great place to live, work and play. Let's build tomorrow together!

“As a business woman, military mom and public servant, I offer a perspective that is not currently represented on the County Board. I have a history of engaging with the community, providing innovative solutions and getting things done.”

-- Lisa Anderson

Name: Greg Boe, Candidate for Carver County Commissioner District 1

Website: www.gregboe.com

Email address: voteforBoe@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: My family and I have lived in Chaska and Chanhassen for 27 years.

Previous leadership experience: I have served in several volunteer and elected positions on various boards, commissions, and councils, and served as a member of the Minnesota State Legislature. I have been employed as a department manager and program manager within county government, and as a supervisor in private industry.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? I have served on the Chaska City Council, Chaska City Planning Commission, Carver County Planning Commission, Southwest Transit Commission (board member and officer), Jonathan Association Board of Directors (board member and officer), Friends of the Minnesota Valley Board of Directors, Minnesota Registered Sanitarian and Registered Environmental Health Specialist Advisory Council (council member and officer), Minnesota Municipal Power Agency Board of Directors, and the North American Hazardous Materials Management Association Board of Directors. I have participated in Carver County Leaders, Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency, and Leadership Chaska. I am a member of our local Lions Club and the Knights of Columbus, and I have volunteered with Christmas in May, Habitat for Humanity, and the Red-Blue Build.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I have had the good fortune to serve in several elected positions, and have worked in both county government and private business. I believe my service in the Legislature will help Carver County when we seek legislative support for important local projects. I have earned a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science, Toxicology, and Chemistry, a graduate certificate in Public Management, and master's degree in Public Administration. I will bring beneficial knowledge and experience to the board.

What do you view as the three top priorities for Carver County and how would you address these? My top three areas of focus will include: managing our growth, strengthening our county communications, and preparing for a positive future. My experience working within the fastest growing county in the northern half of the United States has prepared me for the challenges of managing growth and expanding communications. Ensuring a positive future includes both of these, plus listening to residents, while seeking increased efficiency and transparency within our operations.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? Experience. I have many types and years of applicable experience. I know county government from the inside, having worked for three different counties over the past 30 years. I know how various levels of government



Greg Boe

work, and how we can encourage them to work together and operate more efficiently. I have a master's of Public Administration degree, which provides a strong foundational understanding on how government works and how to fix it when it doesn't.

How do you plan to manage the county's annual budget while ensuring that essential services are maintained and improved? Throughout the county's annual budget process, I will look for changes in proposed expenditures and levels of service, while also asking: How can we maintain that delicate balance of cost vs. service? How can we ensure that existing residents and businesses do not bear the brunt of the load when it comes to expenses created by growth? Are we planning for future service types, and levels? My experience will help us face the challenges in our future.

The tax levy to fund the county budget is a major item of the property tax bill. How would you propose to inform and engage residents so they become more involved in issues and informed on how county money is spent? Many residents do not fully understand how property taxes are calculated, as there are many variables and outside entities that play a role in that complicated process. I will seek to strengthen and expand county transparency and communication with the public, in all aspects of county operation including the budget process. Let's shed some light on this confusing and often mysterious subject, while encouraging public involvement.

What, if anything, should the county do to provide additional or improved activities, recreation, and parks? Step #1 is to maintain the amenities and facilities we already have. We must also complete newer projects that are already in the works. Finally, we should continue to look toward the future to see what new facilities might be needed, as our population grows,

our demographics shift, and public preferences change. We should solicit public input. Tomorrow is best when planned well today!

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the county do to see that private sector businesses can start and grow in our county? We must look for ways to be more business friendly, and reduce our regulatory burden. Encourage local businesses to expand here, and budding entrepreneurs to launch their dreams in Carver County, by offering technical assistance and guidance, etc.

What, if anything, should the county do to increase transparency? Strengthen and expand communications. Open our processes. Encourage public input and participation. Share information openly, and frequently.

Where do you see the county in the next five to 10 years? Carver County will certainly have a larger, and more diverse population. Our communities will continue to grow, and more development will take place in our unincorporated areas. Met Council predicts our population will be at almost 160,000 people by 2050, with an increase of almost 20% expected by 2030. New residents often desire or require higher levels of service. This reality may stress and strain our existing infrastructure. We should be prepared for this eventuality.

"I have many types and years of applicable experience. I know county government from the inside, having worked for three different counties over the past 30 years. I know how various levels of government work, and how we can encourage them to work together and operate more efficiently. I have a master's of Public Administration degree, which provides a strong foundational understanding on how government works and how to fix it when it doesn't."

-- Greg Boe

Name: John Mihajlov

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or johnmihajlov@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: We are celebrating our 11th year in the Nickel Creek Neighborhood of Chaska.

Previous leadership experience: I have executive leadership experience with small businesses as well as multinational businesses. I own two small businesses. One is a consulting firm for hospitality businesses, large and small. The second is a dog treat business with points of distribution in 13 states. I have also had leadership experience in the public sector as a sergeant for the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office VSD Enforcement Division.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? I was a founding board member of the Hennepin County Sheriff's Foundation, as well as an active participant in both the Minnesota and National Restaurant Associations. My family and I have also given our time and support to numerous charities, including those working to address food and shelter insecurity.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I have been preparing by talking to people from all over Carver County, not just my district, visiting leaders as well as residents. I have analyzed the budget as well as the strategic plan and county organizational chart. Personally, I feel I've been preparing for this role during my 17+ years as a volunteer sheriff's deputy and rescue diver, working to help, to problem solve, to connect people and to help create a safe community.

What do you view as the three top priorities for Carver County and how would you address these?

1. Safety of all citizens: As Carver County Commissioner, ensuring the safety of all citizens will be my top priority. This includes taking measures to protect our neighbors from crime, potential hazards, and unforeseen circumstances. I believe that the county has a responsibility and a role to play in creating an environment that is safe for everyone.
2. Optimization of resources: My second priority will be to ensure that the county is optimizing its resources. This means being good stewards of our natural and financial resources, finding a balance that is welcoming to businesses and citizens, and investing in the services that contribute to a vibrant community. By efficiently managing our resources, we can create a sustainable and prosperous future for Carver County.
3. Strategic planning: My third priority will be to focus on short- and long-term strategic planning. Carver County is a great place to live and work, and we need to ensure that our infrastructure and resources are well-maintained to support healthy and sustainable growth. By planning strategically, we can address the needs of the community and make informed decisions that will benefit Carver County in the long run.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? I have two key areas of distinction. First and foremost is my strong business background and vast experience in optimizing operations, including long- and short-term strategic planning while maximizing efficiencies. The second point of differentiation is my 17 years serving the

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John Mihajlov

public. I believe in integrity, communication and working together to achieve results. I pride myself on being very empathetic and approachable but realistic. I am a true believer in getting all the facts before any decision is made and I believe in then being held accountable for the decisions I make and contribute to.

How do you plan to manage the county's annual budget while ensuring that essential services are maintained and improved? My background is in managing large budgets. To effectively manage the county's budget while ensuring that essential services are maintained and improved, a strategic approach must be taken. This includes conducting a thorough assessment of current expenditures, going line by line, to identify areas where efficiencies can be realized without compromising service quality. Engaging community stakeholders in budget discussions can provide valuable insights into priority areas that require funding. One of my concerns is that County Board meetings are held during the work day, meaning many people are not able to participate. Implementing performance metrics can help track the effectiveness of services and guide future allocations. Additionally, exploring alternative funding sources, such as grants and partnerships with local organizations, can enhance financial flexibility. By prioritizing transparency and accountability in the budgeting process, the county can foster trust among residents while making informed decisions that enhance the overall quality of life in the community.

The tax levy to fund the county budget is a major item of the property tax bill. How would you propose to inform and engage residents so they become more involved in issues and informed on how county money is spent? It starts with getting all of the facts and making them available. That may sound simple, but commissioners need to be able to speak to the specifics of the budget, why choices were made and where the money is going. Informing residents about the specifics of a tax levy can be approached in several effective ways:

1. Public Meetings: Organize informational sessions where residents can learn about the tax levy, ask questions, and express their concerns. This can be done in-person or virtually.
2. Printed materials: Distribute printed materials in common areas, local businesses, or through mail. These should clearly outline what the tax levy is for, the financial implications, and how it will benefit the community.
3. Digital Media: Utilize platforms like Facebook and Instagram to share information, infographics, and videos explaining the tax levy. Engaging posts can help reach a broader audience. Offer an opt-in for email updates to county residents, it could be paired with utility bill online access to bring it to wider attention.
4. Website Updates: Create a dedicated section on the county website with detailed information about the tax levy, including FAQs, timelines, and contact information for further inquiries.
5. Community Events: Set up tables at local events where residents can stop by to learn more and ask questions about the tax levy.
6. Surveys or Feedback Forms: Encourage residents to provide their input or ask questions about

the tax levy through online surveys or feedback forms, which can also gauge community sentiment.

By using a combination of these methods, we can effectively inform residents and ensure they understand the specifics of the tax levy so that they can make informed decisions.

What, if anything, should the county do to provide additional or improved activities, recreation, and parks? This is not the role of the Commissioners, but we can take part in supporting the Parks and Recreation Board and be good stewards of the funds allocated to these Boards. We need to be active in the neighborhoods asking what they need and how do these needs make the County a better place.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the county do to see that private sector businesses can start and grow in our county? I am a small business owner and I believe they are the heart and soul of the community. Not only that, but I think a vibrant small business community would attract people living in other counties to visit our towns. If someone is visiting the new Costco in Chaska from Scott County, what do we offer to keep them spending their time and money in Chaska or Victoria? The health of our towns depends on the health of our small businesses. We need to look at old ordinances that are outdated and actually hinder growth. I found one example of a sign ordinance that has been granted a variance hundreds of times. Why is it still on the books? How much time and money do we spend as a county to analyze each case? We need to be a friendly pro-business county to support the population growth expected in the next 15 years. If our stores, restaurants, and entertainment offerings don't keep pace with home construction, our neighbors -- and their tax dollars -- will leave our county for those that have a richer experience to offer.

What, if anything, should the county do to increase transparency? Simply stated, elect leaders who value transparency. Be visible, accountable, available. Communication is a two-way street, not just speaking, but actively listening. We cannot listen to our citizens if they are not informed. With the loss of the Chaska Herald, we need to think more broadly about how our citizens get news. Sessions at libraries. Open office hours. Meetings held not only during traditional working hours so many can't attend or watch live. Publishing recaps of meetings, not just minutes, but easy to access and understand recaps and pending items. Ensuring accessibility to all citizens, including those who don't have English as their first language. Leveraging community groups to get the word out to underrepresented populations on key issues. Everything from TikTok to direct mail, press releases to community forums should be on the table.

Where do you see the county in the next five to 10 years? My long-term vision of the county is to provide a safe and healthy community, which promotes a balance between business development and community growth while maintaining fiscal responsibility and transparency. I envision a Carver County as a place where people want to live, businesses (large and small) want to be and a County where our employees are effective and proud to be serving the public, while advancing their careers. I recognize we are expecting to increase our population by 50% by 2040. By investing in and creating a safe, prosperous and connected community, we can maintain the feel of a neighborly small town, even as we grow.

Name: Matt Udermann

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Email address: matt@youmattertomatt.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: I've been in THIS community about 15 years, active in volunteering, park board, library board and even co-founder of a community 5K that ran for five years (before Chamber took ball for regional expansion).

Previous leadership experience: I've had the privilege of leading various teams from Fortune 500 companies (Aramark, Best Buy, Whirlpool/Maytag), franchise (general manager for two of the top stores in the largest mobile device repair franchise in the U.S.), various startups, not-for-profits and now helping lead 750+ staff at the county level. I remain steadfast that our best asset (and around 85% of our levy budget) is our people. I've boldly advocated to employee engagement investment -- including proposing we have a three-year annual quantifiable third-party (12Q) measurement and invest in addressing areas of concern. I'm also the only local elected that seeks input from each staff member annually. This year's questions included 1) What's one thing we should elevate at the board level for high impact? 2) Would you recommend Carver County to a friend or family member for employment?

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? My kids and I have focused our efforts locally through volunteerism serving at our local church, Bountiful Basket Food Shelf, Love Inc., Auburn Manor, Feed My Starving Children and more. We also enjoy regular participation in the Park Run (<https://www.parkrun.us/courthouselake/>). Personally, I represent Carver County on various boards listed in full here: <https://www.carvercountymn.gov/government/county-board-of-commissioners/commissioner-biographies/matt-udermann-district-3>

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: "Results over Rhetoric" come largely from "Relationships and Vision." I've been intentional in building relationships with solution-oriented allies across a broad spectrum (school, city leadership, businesses/developers, constituents, stakeholders, etc.). Growing these relationships helps deliver on shared vision from collecting insights from 1,000+ very different people helping shape a list of 100 things I said I'd accomplish -- we're making progress on all, see here: youmattertomatt.com/resultsmatter. The role being a public servant is different from a politician and how you approach the job. I'm a public servant -- I put people over politics, results over rhetoric and solutions over smears.

What do you view as the three top priorities for Carver County and how would you address these? Shouldn't elections be about YOU, the voter? I think so. Four pillars drive the YOU MATTER campaign. People Matter -- people before politics. Community Matters -- you should be able to live here a lifetime if you choose. Finances Matter -- we need to be smarter stewards of your tax dollars. Results Matter -- results over rhetoric (www.youmattertomatt.com/resultsmatter).



Matt Udermann

Top issues voters when knocking on doors?

1. Sustainable taxes
2. Need for strategic vision (including addressing 20+ years of deferred maintenance in a planful way and 2050 comprehensive planning)
3. Employee Engagement/Talent Pipeline
4. Mental Health and Wellness -particularly working upstream on multigenerational impact.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? I work harder. I prioritize results over rhetoric. I have/continue to deliver results (the only candidate bold enough to put out an actual list of 100 things I said I'd try to accomplish and come back four years later with progress on all -- see youmattertomatt.com/resultsmatter). My efforts are in and for Carver County.

How do you plan to manage the county's annual budget while ensuring that essential services are maintained and improved? Why wait? We're doing it now. When I joined the board, staffing levels were higher than most the metro (we were at 7.1 FTE/1,000 population), we had uncompetitive health insurance rates (in some cases, costing 3 to 5X peers), we had 20 years deferred maintenance in our parks (with no plan to remedy), we had a 1965 building needing replacement (and no plan to do so). Here we are just four years later, and through some tough conversations, data gathering and a willing staff, we now have a plan and a path to address all without double-digit tax increases other entities have chosen/are facing.

The tax levy to fund the county budget is a major item of the property tax bill. How would you propose to inform and engage residents so they become more involved in issues and informed on how county money is spent? Why wait? We're doing it now! I helped lead the charge to pave the way for hiring the county's first chief communications officer. In this role, the expanded expectation is beyond reactionary to proactively seek the input of stakeholders and move upstream for results. I've also been a champion for greater transparency (ex: streaming or posting videos from work sessions). It's also our job as elected

to proactively seek and action on stakeholder input -- not just wave at parades or show up to the pork chop dinners.

What, if anything, should the county do to provide additional or improved activities, recreation, and parks? Our parks team doesn't get enough credit for the impact they deliver. I'm passionate about our parks/trails impact on overall public health, activities and community connections. I wasted no time identifying/helping close a gap of 20 years deferred maintenance in our parks. In the last four years, we've built the most significant building in over 20 years of county history (Paradise Commons), helped lead the decision to accelerate the parks master planning (and budget), helped accelerate the first major improvement to Lake Minnewashta in 15+ years (\$1.2M playground replacement), and helped accelerate partnership funding from Met Council, State, etc. to minimize the county contributions needed. I've also cast a vision of 5M visits by 2050. An estimated 800K visits in 2021, 1.2M in 2022, 1.6M in 2023 helps put us on the right path. I've cast a vision to identify the top 25 needed trail connections (for safety, mobility, etc.) with 12 that have been or are planned to be completed by 2026.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should the county do to see that private sector businesses can start and grow in our county? 1. Get out of the way. 2. Help close gaps (remove costly/unnecessary barriers/red tape, and close gaps including workforce housing, workforce, transportation/infrastructure, etc.) 3. Cast clear vision. 4. Zone for it.

What, if anything, should the county do to increase transparency? We should record all work sessions. We should consider moving meeting times to a more accessible time than the current 9A time. We should remove unnecessary bureaucracy by having a non-political rotating board chair (two-year rotations). We should be supportive of alternatives to share with the public especially since the Chaska Herald is no longer operating.

Where do you see the County in the next five to 10 years? One of two paths -- either pricing out families and those aging in homes OR intentional about planning to deliver on county's mission to be a "great place to live, work and play for a lifetime." I'm working for the latter -- no asterisks (you shouldn't have to make \$200K+ to call this place home -- and I'm motivated for Carver County to be a place your kids and grandkids and mine can consider when they decide where to buy their first home or start their first job. The next 20 years will shape the next 200 years in Carver County. We're currently the fastest growing county in the state (with three of the fastest growing cities in the state) and need to be intentional with physical AND social infrastructure of change facing our county (and blend them together). This growth needs to be intentional and in partnership with key city/township leaders on a diversified tax base (ie: that households share in the tax burden with businesses) including exploring possible economic overlay districts along 212 to maximize the industrial and commercial tax base that will help us have a balanced tax base for years to come.

Name: Sam Aldoubal for School Board

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Email: SamAldoubalforschoolboard@gmail.com

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? As a father, husband, and community member, I have observed the post-COVID changes in our schools and am eager to contribute positively to help students achieve their goals.

What do you see as the top three priorities for the school district today and how would you address these?

Key Priorities:

-- Let Teachers, Teach: Provide adequate resources and support for teachers to enhance their teaching methods and professional development.

-- Let Parents Parent: Encourage open communication and collaboration between parents and teachers to ensure the best outcomes for

students.

-- Let Students Learn: Implement effective and engaging learning strategies to cater to diverse learning styles and abilities.

-- Hold Administrators Accountable: Establish clear performance metrics and evaluation processes for administrators to ensure accountability and effectiveness in their roles.

Where do you see the School District in the next five to 10 years? Envisioning the school board's future in five to 10 years is both challenging and exciting. If elected, I envision the Eastern Carver County School District leading the state in education.



Sam Aldoubal



Name: Robin Michael Bielefeldt

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Email address: robinmbielefeldt@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Chaska, Minnesota, for seven years.

Previous leadership experience: Petty Officer Second Class on USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71); vice-chair Carver County Board of Adjustment; Chairman Carver County U of M Extension Committee.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? VoteVets PAC, Boy Scouts of America (Eagle Scout, Assistant Scoutmaster), SD48 DFL Chaska Ward 1 chairman.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: As a father of three small children, I'm passionate about Early Childhood Education. As an engineer, I bring a fresh perspective on STEM learning.

What do you see as the top three priorities for the school district today and how would you address these?

1. Transparency. I intend to advocate for better engagement with our community and ensure that every dollar we spend on education goes as far as possible.
2. Literacy Rates. Ensuring as many children as possible qualify for Early Childhood Education is how we ensure every child has the foundations for reading before entering Kindergarten.
3. Expansion. This area is growing at an incredible rate and our schools and teachers need to be able to keep up with demand.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? As a U.S. Navy veteran and a blue-collar worker with three small children, I've proven time and again that I can get the job done. The district needs representation from the hard-working people of our community who feel left behind by our politics. I will never apologize for my continuing support for worker's collective bargaining rights and universal pre-K.

What is your stance on the current curriculum? If or what changes are necessary? ISD112 has recently had a shake-up in its leadership and I look forward to hearing from our community about what works and what doesn't. As the voice of the people, our board members must be involved in setting the curriculum. I



Robin Bielefeldt

believe that continued focus on STEM learning and Early Childhood Education is how we give our students the tools they need to succeed.

What would be your approach to managing the school district's budget effectively? You can't solve every problem by throwing money at it. One of our priorities must be retaining our talented staff and educators, keeping them right here in the county. The right people with the right policies can solve our long-term budget issues by working smarter and not harder.

Do you favor cellphone restrictions in schools, and if so, what restrictions? No, I don't because student's privacy and access to information are far more important than any distractions they may cause. Besides, the students will find a way to bypass any new restrictions if they feel pressured by persons in authority. A cellphone ban also gives our staff just one more thing to monitor, placing more pressure on them.

Even though school districts now have the statutory authority to renew operating levies without voter approval, should the board have the voters decide? Why? Absolutely, voters should decide, as this is the underlying philosophy behind our system of government. If

the people's property and sales tax money isn't being spent effectively, they need to ensure they have a mechanism to send it to where it does the most good. I can never imagine spending someone else's money without showing them exactly how and where it's going will do the most good.

Should our superintendent be contractually responsible for metrics such as enrollment, test scores, and the district's financial condition? Why or why not? No, this is why we have a School Board in the first place. As the voice of the people, it is school board members' responsibility to put the work in, follow the law, and represent our community in these matters. Education policy is proposed by the superintendent and approved or rejected by the people, as represented by the board. If our students are falling behind, I see it as an indictment of the School Board more than anyone else.

Where do you see the School District in the next five to 10 years? I'm proud to call Carver County home and in 10 years I hope to see more of our governor's education agenda implemented, like free school lunches and the unmitigated success of that program. Next on the list is universal pre-K and expanded special education programs. Every bit of time and effort we put into our district now will pay increased dividends in the next decade for both my children and yours.

“The district needs representation from the hard-working people of our community who feel left behind by our politics. I will never apologize for my continuing support for worker's collective bargaining rights and universal pre-K.”

-- Robin Bielefeldt



Name: Angela Erickson

Website: angelaerickson.me

Email address: ericksonforschoolboard@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Chanhassen; over 10 years

Previous leadership experience: ECCS School Board member and treasurer, 2020-present; SW Metro Intermediate School District 288 Board member, 2022-present; chair, District 112 Foundation Board of Directors, 2015-19; various committee, council, and task force leadership roles.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2021-present; Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, 2016 – present; National Association of College Admission Counselors, 2014-16; Minnesota Association of College Admission Counselors, 2014-16; American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, 2012-14; Minnesota Council on the Teaching of Language and Culture, 2011-14; American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2007-14; American Association of Applied Linguistics, 2006-14; Modern Language Association, 2003-14.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: From managing significant budgets, developing and stewarding strategic plans, engaging in equity work, and evaluating complex programs and initiatives, I am a visionary leader, a dynamic communicator, and an empathetic listener with a strong track record of collaboration to maximize innovation, efficiency and impact. As a former educator, I am well versed in theory and practice around student success and assessment and have been able to bring that expertise to the board table to offer feedback on how to refine data-driven decision-making across the system. Finally, as an incumbent running for reelection, I have direct experience serving in this role and understand the critical work of diligent oversight of ECCS policy and budgets.

What do you see as the top three priorities for the school district today and how would you address these?

1. Consistent investment in our schools: Studies show that community investment in public schools is linked to upward economic mobility and increases in self-worth and good decision-making in young people. We must continue to anticipate needs and identify strategic investment opportunities, demonstrate the return on investment of taxpayer resources, and maintain trust of the community as responsible financial stewards.
2. Communication and relationship building: Proactive, consistent communication from district leadership is a cornerstone of accountability and trust. Maintaining open lines of communication and developing creative solutions to ensure community members throughout the district have the information they need to remain informed is more important than ever.
3. Increased sophistication in data-driven decision-making: Closing achievement gaps, improving outcomes, and rectifying systems that perpetuate educational injustice are laudable goals. We have a fantastic opportunity to accelerate our improvements in student learning and development by using increasingly nuanced data to drive our decision-making.



Angela Erickson

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? While I am not the only candidate with a background in education, I am the candidate with the most extensive background in assessment and evaluation of student learning (both my MA and MS degrees are related to outcomes assessment). This background, combined with significant leadership experience in multiple roles that include personnel and budgetary oversight, make my background and preparation unique among the candidates and an ideal fit for the role.

What is your stance on the current curriculum? If or what changes are necessary? I am encouraged by the recent shift toward literacy instruction that focuses on the science of reading and look forward to seeing the long-term results of that curricular adaptation in our district and others. I am also pleased with the progress we have made in ECCS to create stronger curricular alignment across our middle schools. With a system distributed across many buildings, it is important that we are maintaining consistently high standards and sharing knowledge about what is working from building to building so that we adapt to the needs of our specific learners and cultural realities in the area.

What would be your approach to managing the school district's budget effectively? Generally speaking, I favor continued investment in our classrooms through both personnel and programs, while continuing to think creatively about lean spending and efficiencies across our administrative functions. That said, planning and anticipation are incredibly important as leaders attempt to communicate needs and challenges based on both the factors they can control and those they cannot. Funding formulas and shifting expectations at the legislative level create impacts that cannot always be anticipated, but maintaining open lines of communication across the system regarding what's most effective, what we can afford to discontinue, and what additional costs may be coming is important.

Do you favor cellphone restrictions in schools, and if so, what restrictions? I do believe there are benefits to limiting access to phone use during the school day. Cellphones are a time and ener-

gy suck for everyone, and the impact on young peoples' mental health is well documented. Not only does limiting access reduce distraction and encourage sustained focus on academic tasks, it also encourages live, human-to-human interaction in the classroom to develop and maintain relationships with classmates and staff. At the same time, since behavior regarding cellphone use is deeply ingrained in our culture, it is important to monitor closely both the benefits and potential limitations of any restrictions/regulations and make shifts to policy and practice as needed.

Even though school districts now have the statutory authority to renew operating levies without voter approval, should the board have the voters decide? Why? While I can understand the arguments on both sides of this conversation, I personally consider the charge of the School Board and its duties to serve the best interests of the district and its students in my calculus. For me, this means doing what I can to provide consistent and predictable funding, particularly when it is funding that has been previously affirmed by voters. Managing an election requires resources to execute, both in human capital and in monetary expenses, and given the statistics regarding the incredibly strong renewal rate, it may be the most fiscally responsible decision in many cases. That said, ensuring that we have opportunities to receive input from our community members and are responsive to the needs and interests of our constituents is important, in addition to maintaining transparency in how resources are used to support learning across the district.

Should our superintendent be contractually responsible for metrics such as enrollment, test scores, and the district's financial condition? Why or why not? While I believe wholeheartedly in accountability for leadership, I think it is important to set goals and then assess performance based on their role and what they can be reasonably expected to impact directly through their work. In the case of the superintendent, their primary duties center around building the architecture of the district required for the system to thrive, serving as the figurehead and lead for culture development and expectation setting, and serving as an important bridge between the district and communities. More specifically, enrollment figures can be impacted by many, many factors that are fully outside the superintendent's control (i.e. birth rates, new construction rates), as can test scores (i.e. student preparation and attendance, opt out rate). With regard to the district's financial standing, while I do not feel it is appropriate to find any of these elements as part of a contract that outlines terms of employment in the education industry, given that a superintendent is charged with the day-to-day management of the district's budget, I could certainly see performance evaluation related to fiscal stewardship.

Where do you see the School District in the next five to 10 years? I am optimistic and excited about the direction of our school district. I see Eastern Carver County Schools as a district of choice in the area that is a source of pride for our area. I see the district delivering vocational exploration, college preparation, rigorous learning, and personal growth for all learners while continuing to adapt and respond to the needs of our learners, families and community members.

Name: Sean Olsen

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Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Chaska, 21 years

Previous leadership experience: Eastern Carver County School Board – vice chair (2023-present), treasurer (2022), director (2021).

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Board Member, Chaska Parks & Recreation Board (2011-19); president, Points West Homeowners Association (2012-18); founder, Even Better Eastern Carver County Schools (2017-20).

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: Our family has had three children (Lauren, 2024 graduate; Abby, 9th grader; Ryan, 6th grader) in ECCS. We are committed to this district and have been involved in our schools and community. My professional experience in technology and finance gives me a well-rounded background for addressing critical issues in the district.

What do you see as the top three priorities for the school district today and how would you address these?

1. Accelerate Learning: Metrics show that ECCS withstood the pandemic better than most of our peer districts. For instance, ECCS is the only one of our 15 district comparison group that reported MCA scores higher than pre-pandemic levels in 2024. The efforts that have started the last two years as part of our strategic plan are gaining traction and we must continue pushing forward with them, as they are producing improved academic results.
2. Build Our Future: It's time for ECCS to stand tall and be proud of our district's many strengths. Instead of a deficit mindset, we need to invest and promote those areas we want to emphasize as our district's calling cards – specifically, superb academics featuring personalized learning and “big school” opportunities in academics, arts, athletics, and activities in a “small school” environment.
3. Culture is Critical: ECCS has done a lot of work over the last few years to improve the climate in our schools for students and staff, including the development of identity harm policies and procedures that have received state-wide and national acclaim. We need to keep going on that work, to ensure every student and staff member is respected and valued.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? During my first term on the board, I have provided steady and transparent leadership for our district during challenging times. I have prioritized the needs of students, staff, and families, centering their desired daily experience at the heart of what we do. I have worked hard to explain difficult topics with clarity so the public can understand the challenges we face and why certain decisions were made. I have shown a willingness and ability to work with all sectors of our community in making our schools even better every day. I have proven myself as a strong advocate for the critical role of public



Sean Olsen

education in our community.

What is your stance on the current curriculum? If or what changes are necessary? As a district, ECCS is always evaluating to ensure that our curriculum is meeting the needs of our student and staff. Over the last four years, the board has pushed for higher levels of rigor and we have implemented new class offerings and sequencing to address those needs. Using tools like FastBridge, our teachers are able have good data on hand to guide interventions for students who may be struggling with certain learning targets. Additionally, ECCS began implementation of “science of reading” based curriculum before it was required by the state and we are seeing promising results.

What would be your approach to managing the school district's budget effectively? State funding has failed to keep up with inflation over the last 20 years, putting constant pressure on the district's budget and burdening local property taxpayers to fill the gaps. My budgetary goals are to prioritize classroom spending, eliminate unnecessary spending, and always be respectful of the demands we place on local property taxpayers.

Do you favor cellphone restrictions in schools, and if so, what restrictions? I support the current restrictions the district has in place. Over the last two years, ECCS has put in place restrictions (“no cell from bell to bell” at the secondary levels and no cellphone use at the elementary level) that strike a common-sense approach and minimizes distraction during the school day. As with other policies and procedures, we regularly re-evaluate based on feedback to ensure we are meeting objectives.

Even though school districts now have the statutory authority to renew operating levies without voter approval, should the board have the voters decide? Why? As I did in

when the ECCS board faced this question in 2023, I would consider feedback from the public, review data on how other districts are using this new authority, and study the potential financial impacts of losing that revenue stream before making a final decision on the one-time board renewal of an operating levy.

Should our superintendent be contractually responsible for metrics such as enrollment, test scores, and the district's financial condition? Why or why not? Most districts, including ECCS, have moved away from the concept of linking compensation to specific metric results. Many of the metrics often cited by proponents of such a proposal are things a superintendent does not have direct control over. For instance, enrollment trends tend to be driven more by birth rates and demographic and/or housing mix changes than management decisions made by district leadership. Our board has a robust superintendent evaluation model and the Board ultimately holds the responsibility over the superintendent position, including having the authority to change leaders if deemed necessary.

Where do you see the School District in the next five to 10 years? I am optimistic about the future of ECCS and, with the right leadership, I am confident that we will demonstrate continued progress on key measures of academic performance, cultivate a welcoming, inclusive culture for students, staff, and families, and establish ECCS as a destination district for families and staff.

“I have prioritized the needs of students, staff, and families, centering their desired daily experience at the heart of what we do. I have worked hard to explain difficult topics with clarity so the public can understand the challenges we face and why certain decisions were made. I have shown a willingness and ability to work with all sectors of our community in making our schools even better every day. I have proven myself as a strong advocate for the critical role of public education in our community.”

-- Sean Olsen

Name: Rachel Berg Scherer

Website: rachelfor112.com

Email address: rachelfor112@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Chanhassen – 22 years; Chaska (current) – eight years

Previous leadership experience: Church Council vice president: Crown of Glory Lutheran Church, Chaska; classroom teacher: Baltimore County Public Schools; supervisor of communications staff: School Sisters of Notre Dame in Baltimore; Legislative Office of Compliance on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C.; supervisor of interns: Minnesota Attorney General’s Office

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Confirmation teacher, choir member & volunteer, Crown of Glory Lutheran Church, Chaska; co-founder, Team 112; Scouts BSA Troop 174 merit badge counselor; Chaska Area Youth Basketball Association head coach; Minnesota Valley Community Band member; National Council of Teachers of English; National Association of Writers and Writing Programs; National Textbook and Academic Authors Association; Editorial Freelancers Association.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office? I have lived my life surrounded by education and public service. Both my parents were public school teachers. My dad taught for more than 35 years in District 112, and my mom taught the same amount of time in Bloomington. They were also both volunteers and public servants, from Sunday School classrooms and teen homeless shelters to the Chanhassen Parks & Recreation Commission and beyond. I have followed my family’s model of servant leadership, budgeting for nonprofits’ finances and volunteering as a teacher and mentor. I have also lived my entire life in education, both inside and outside the classroom.

What do you see as the top three priorities for the school district today and how would you address these?

1. Academic achievement: Every student is gifted and every student has needs. Every student has the right to a learning environment that supports their full potential. This means empowering and supporting staff to provide that environment.
2. Clear communication: Board members must build real relationships. We must listen in order to truly understand. We do not always have to agree, but I will always listen, and I will always hear.
3. Maximizing resources: Our buildings must be run equitably, with resources allocated in the most prudent way possible.

What differentiates you from the other candidate(s)? My life experiences have uniquely prepared me for a seat on our School Board. I grew up with two teachers who served more than a combined 70 years in the classroom. I worked on Capitol Hill for a nonpartisan agency, communicating with Congress on both sides of the aisle. I worked in the nonprofit sector before becoming a teacher myself. I taught high



Rachel Berg Scherer

school English in Baltimore until my son was born, at which time I founded what has since grown into a thriving writing and editing firm. I am the proud parent of two ECCS students — August at Chaska Middle School West and Ruthie at La Academia — and a past host parent to teachers from Spain and El Salvador. I also worked with two of our teachers to create a program that connects ECCS 7th graders with local veterans. This combination of communication skills, classroom experience, business savvy and life experiences sets me apart.

What is your stance on the current curriculum? If or what changes are necessary?

While developing curriculum is not a role of the School Board, I know as a former classroom teacher that curriculum isn’t developed or implemented in a vacuum. When I taught, I welcomed conversations with parents and community members about the state’s curriculum. And I appreciated when the state lawmakers who developed the education standards listened to those of us who were tasked with implementing it. I hope this collaborative approach will continue in Eastern Carver County, where both my children are challenged and enriched in the classroom every day.

What would be your approach to managing the school district’s budget effectively? As stated above, our board is tasked with maximizing our resources in a way that gives every student the opportunity to succeed. Though district staff lead much of the overall budgeting process, I would still advocate for — and be an active part of — community engagement before any significant decisions are brought to the board for approval. Budget conversations can

be very difficult, and the decisions can be even harder. Consistent feedback from a variety of stakeholder groups is always necessary, but this is especially true in the budgeting process.

Do you favor cell phone restrictions in schools, and if so, what restrictions? The current “bell-to-bell no cell” restriction is a mandated order. As a former teacher and a parent of a middle schooler, I can speak to how difficult it is to manage a learning space or a relationship when competing with technology.

Even though school districts now have the statutory authority to renew operating levies without voter approval, should the board have the voters decide? Why? This can only be answered on a case-by-case basis. Since school board members are tasked with listening and learning before making any budgetary decisions, a blanket yes/no answer would not be responsible.

Should our superintendent be contractually responsible for metrics such as enrollment, test scores, and the district’s financial condition? Why or why not? Again, this is case-by-case, as every personnel issue comes with a host of outside variables. A blanket response would therefore also not be thoughtful or appropriate here. I hope our board continues to thoughtfully consider personnel matters behind closed doors, as is required by law.

Where do you see the school district in the next five to 10 years? We will continue to be a destination district for families like mine who have purposefully chosen Eastern Carver County. We will support our staff at every level. And we will provide opportunities for every student to have the specific supports they need in order to find success.

“My life experiences have uniquely prepared me for a seat on our School Board. I grew up with two teachers who served more than a combined 70 years in the classroom. I worked on Capitol Hill for a nonpartisan agency, communicating with Congress on both sides of the aisle. I worked in the nonprofit sector before becoming a teacher myself.”

-- Rachel Berg Scherer



House District 48B Candidates

Name: Lucy Rehm

Website: www.LucyRehm.com

Email address: Lucy@lucyrehm.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Chanhassen, 27 years

Previous leadership experience: Chanhassen City Council

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I served as a member of the Chanhassen City Council and developed a strong understanding of what members of my community care about. I have also had the privilege of serving as the state representative for District 48B (Chanhassen and Chaska) for the last two years and worked with members of the community to advance issues important to them

What do you view as the three top priorities for Minnesota and how would you address these?

- 1) Educating and taking care of our youth.
- 2) Making healthcare more affordable and accessible.
- 3) Protecting our natural resources while building climate resilient infrastructure in the face of a changing climate.

Education: I am proud to be the co-author on historic legislation to increase funding to our public schools, index the funding to inflation and prioritize the wellbeing of our students. We passed universal school lunches, invested in the Read Act (a literacy program that has been scientifically proven to increase reading scores), made historic investments in our libraries, and made higher education more accessible and affordable. We also took steps to address the school shootings and gun violence that is impacting all of our communities.

Here is a summary of what we accomplished: Over \$17 million in additional funding for District 112 schools for 2024/25; over \$15 Million in additional funding for District 276 schools for 2024/25, increased funding for special education, english learners, student support staff (counselors, social workers, nurses), libraries, transportation costs, free access to menstrual products for students in grades 4-12; funded school mapping so emergency response personnel have access to accurate maps of our schools for rapid responses.

Healthcare: We have made progress on making healthcare in the state of Minnesota more affordable. I voted for legislation that bans a clinic from using medical debt as a way to deny patient care. We also passed additional funding for hospitals and nursing homes to ensure they can provide care to all members of our community. I will continue to fight for a Minnesota public option which would allow access to affordable healthcare for all Minnesota residents at a reduced cost to individuals and employers compared to for profit health plans. Over \$469,000 for Auburn Manor in Chaska; \$18 million to assist hospitals in providing additional care for patients with nowhere to go; over \$400 million (2024-2027) to assist Minnesota seniors.

We are taking decisive action to mitigate climate change and build housing so that everyone has a home. We invested in roads and bridges. As a matter of fact, I am the only elected official in Carver County to vote to fund Highway



Lucy Rehm

5 and CSAH 18 (West 82nd Street). My Republican colleagues voted against this funding as well as the 2024 bonding bill. I am proud to have served on the Sustainable Infrastructure Committee working to build a climate resilient state and minimize the impact on our environment. We banned PFAS, invested in replacing our dangerous lead pipes, and worked to simplify permit reform. We passed the Clean Energy by 2040 legislation with the support of labor unions and we enacted worker protections. \$200k in funding for Lake Minnewashta Regional Park Creative Playground; over \$13 million for conservation groups such as Ducks Unlimited to restore and enhance the Minnesota River Watershed, wetlands, and lakes including Chaska Lake; funding for the Carver County Soil and Water Conservation District to eliminate budgetary uncertainty; increased funding to address Emerald Ash Borer.

Polls show that Minnesota residents view the economy as a major concern. What specific actions or approaches should state lawmakers take to address the concern? One of the things we need to do is focus our tax dollars on things that are imperative to economic growth in our communities. Myself and the DFL at large have focused on infrastructure improvement in our communities that both provide good union jobs and strengthen our transportation system. We are also focusing on addressing the local shortfalls in school funding to ensure that our children are receiving the required education to be successful and competitive in today's workforce. These have shown a proven return on investment for our communities over time.

For the years when Minnesota has budget surpluses, do you favor increased investing in government programs or tax relief? If the State has a budget deficit, how would you balance the state's budget -- cut spending or increase taxes? Surpluses give the Legislature an opportunity to provide tax relief to those who need it most (eliminating Social Security tax for our seniors) and invest in things like bridges, roads and schools that are always dealing with funding shortfalls. We should always be reviewing our spending to make sure tax dollars are being used responsibly. Deficits can be addressed with a tax increase, however, we should always be looking at cutting discretionary spending before increasing the tax burden

on our communities.

As a legislator, how would you address concerns regarding healthcare for Minnesota residents? Healthcare should be affordable, comprehensive and accessible for all Minnesotans. I will continue to work on the Minnesota public option and toward ensuring that insurance companies cannot deny physician recommended care due to cost. Many Americans are an accident or illness away from bankruptcy and that is unacceptable.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should Minnesota do to see that private sector businesses can start and grow? Minnesota's public option would significantly reduce the financial burden on companies to provide health insurance to their employees and facilitate small businesses by allowing entrepreneurs access to affordable healthcare for their family when going out on their own. Invest in an educated and competitive workforce through affordable post-secondary education and prioritize local businesses for government contracts over multinational corporations.

What, if anything, should be done to increase transparency of government in Minnesota? Government has never been more transparent, but you as a citizen must do the work to stay informed. If you ever have questions, I encourage you to reach out to me at Rep.Lucy.Rehm@house.mn.gov. You are able to track all legislation and watch recordings of all committee and floor sessions at the following sites: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/> - Bill tracking, bill text, and legislative information; www.youtube.com/@MNHouseInfo - Committee and floor sessions.

What changes, if any, are needed regarding Minnesota's environmental policy and permitting? Permitting should be responsibly reviewed to ensure that we are not trading our lakes, rivers, streams, forests and drinking water in exchange for short-term gains.

What is your opinion of the Metropolitan Council? What reforms, if any, are needed? We have seen mismanagement of funding in the past that required additional oversight. This is something that we will continue to review and address.

In a Pew Research Center poll this year, 86% of Americans responding agreed with the statement, "Republicans and Democrats are more focused on fighting each other than on solving problems." With that in mind, outline your best idea for increasing bipartisanship to solve Minnesota's biggest problems. I'm focused on issues that we can all agree on. Good and safe schools, clean air and drinking water, thriving small businesses driving local reinvestment, and outdoor spaces for our communities.

Where do you envision the State of Minnesota in the next 5 to 10 years? I see us as a continued leader in infrastructure (best roads in the country), protecting and growing our local businesses, ensuring access to affordable healthcare for all Minnesotans, and ensuring our schools are fully funded so that our children can thrive in the better world we have left them.



House District 48B Candidates

Name: Caleb Steffenhagen

Website: www.calebformn.com

Email address: caleb@calebformn.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Chaska, since 2020

Previous leadership experience: Intelligence Officer Army National Guard. 10+ year veteran teacher. Small business owner. Husband and father.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Guard Duty, Lions in Chaska, Board of Directors US Broomball Association.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: As a teacher, father, and officer in the National Guard serving my community is important to me. I will work to bring people together to create stronger solutions that reflect the unique values of our district. I've knocked on thousands of doors, and I'm prepared to make their voices heard.

What do you view as the three top priorities for Minnesota and how would you address these?

1. Affordability: Tax on your gas, groceries, car, and social security. Mandates on top of mandates that cripple our residents and schools. Let's do away with the failing mandates and one of the heaviest tax burdens in the Nation. Read that again, we are the most taxed state in the Nation. Let's change that in November.
2. Education: Our schools in Minnesota need to catch up. We used to rank #1 in the country and now we are in a free fall. We are prioritizing all the wrong things, all the while burdened by mandates that give schools no flexibility to spend money where or how they need it. Minneapolis Public is a very different school than out in Chaska or Chanhassen. Schools like students need flexibility and right now they are restricted by politicians in government who are not even actual teachers and worse aren't listening to us. I am a teacher. Send me and let's get our state back on track.
3. Reducing the political divide: We need a representative who brings people together and that is my background. I bring students together to resolve differences, I bring my soldiers together to accomplish the mission. I have ups and downs with my small business but I find unique ways to get the job done for the customer. This is who I am. I bring people together despite differences.

Polls show that Minnesota residents view the economy as a major concern. What specific actions or approaches should state lawmakers take to address the concern? My wife and I and you at home are paying obscene amounts for gas and groceries. Many of us are not saving, going on vacations, or living the American Dream. It doesn't have to be this way. Our prices are inflated because of these restrictive mandates and laws. Let's end the burdens so businesses and supply chains can be competitive again, reducing their prices and bringing sanity back to our wallets.



Caleb Steffenhagen

For the years when Minnesota has budget surpluses, do you favor increased investment in government programs or tax relief? If the State has a budget deficit, how would you balance the state's budget -- cut spending or increase taxes? Budget surpluses should never be 19 billion. That means your state over-taxed you by over \$5,000 per household and that should be a crime. Yet that's what this state did to you and on top of that they spent all of that money and gave none of it back to those who paid it. I am in favor of using a surplus to save for a rainy day, lower taxes the following year, or give it back!

As a legislator, how would you address concerns regarding healthcare for Minnesota residents? There are gaps in our healthcare network. I have seen my parent's generation retiring and not yet on Medicare lose hundreds of thousands of dollars because their significant other had an Alzheimer's diagnosis and needed serious care and their health insurance only covers up to a certain percentage. We need to bridge these gaps and ensure insurance companies live up to their end of the bargain.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should Minnesota do to see that private-sector businesses can start and grow? We need to create a business-friendly climate to keep jobs in Minnesota. Corporate taxes are a great way to stimulate our state economy and relieve individual tax burdens. Businesses are leaving Minnesota because our corporate taxes are so high and local individuals and families are responsible for paying more.

What, if anything, should be done to increase the transparency of government in Minnesota? We need to make sure agencies are complying with open records laws and make sure information is easy to find for our neighbors who are looking to see how the government is spending our tax dollars.

What changes, if any, are needed regarding Minnesota's environmental policy and permitting? Minnesota has one of the most unique and beautiful outdoor environments. Consistency is the key to our environmental policy. We need it to be realistic and move at the speed of business and technology. We can protect the environment and have agencies that uphold high standards in a realistic way that doesn't pass along the financial burden to the individuals of our state.

What is your opinion of the Metropolitan Council? What reforms, if any, are needed? The Met Council is an unelected body that levies taxes on the people, this needs to end. They should be directly accountable to the legislature and the people.

In a Pew Research Center poll this year, 86% of Americans responding agreed with the statement, "Republicans and Democrats are more focused on fighting each other than on solving problems." With that in mind, outline your best idea for increasing bipartisanship to solve Minnesota's biggest problems. I got into this race because my neighbors want someone who will listen and represent the unique needs of our district. We don't need division, we need unity. We need to reduce the political divide by doing what is right for the people of our district. If elected I will be available to listen and hold regular town halls.

Where do you envision the State of Minnesota in the next 5 to 10 years? Fresh air, friendly people, and everyone still waiting for the Vikings to win the Super Bowl. I love our state and look forward to a future with stronger solutions for our amazing people. I'd like to see our public education get back on track and our government look more like its people, kind, hard-working, and working together to get things done for our great State. Let's do that Minnesota. I would appreciate your vote in November.

"I got into this race because my neighbors want someone who will listen and represent the unique needs of our district. We don't need division, we need unity. We need to reduce the political divide by doing what is right for the people of our district. If elected I will be available to listen and hold regular town halls."

-- Caleb Steffenhagen



House District 17B Candidates

Name: Bobbie Harder

Website: www.harderforhouse.com

Email address: harderforhouse@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Henderson Township

Previous leadership experience: Sibley County Commissioner

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? I'm involved in several organizations. Visit www.harderforhouse.com for more information.

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: Sibley County Commissioner; deputy clerk on Henderson Township.

What do you view as the three top priorities for Minnesota and how would you address these?

1. Every child in Minnesota deserves access to a high-quality education that prepares them for the future. Less than 50% of our students can read or do math at grade level, and we have some of the worst educational disparities in the nation. We need to empower parents and reduce burdensome mandates that make it harder to educate students.

2. Families across Minnesota are struggling with the rising cost of living. We need to reduce taxes and eliminate unnecessary regulations that drive up costs. We need to make life more affordable for everyone in Minnesota instead of forcing out businesses with mandates and one of the highest business tax rates in the nation.

3. We need to support our law enforcement by making sure they have the funding and training they need. We also need policies that hold criminals accountable instead of allowing them to reoffend.

Polls show that Minnesota residents view the economy as a major concern. What specific actions or approaches should state lawmakers take to address the concern? We should focus on creating an environment where local businesses can thrive. Reducing the \$10 billion in new taxes passed over the last two years will put more money back into family budgets. Eliminating red tape and simplifying regulations will make it easier for Minnesotans to start and grow their businesses. Investing in workforce development by supporting vocational training and education will ensure that Minnesotans have the skills needed for high-demand jobs. It takes an all-of-the above approach, and we can do this together if we focus on the right priorities instead of funding unaccountable non-profits and increasing taxes.

For the years when Minnesota has budget surpluses, do you favor increased investing in government programs or tax relief? If the State has a budget deficit, how would you balance the state's budget -- cut spending or increase taxes? Minnesota had a nearly \$18 billion dollar surplus. It's unfortunate, the majority party squandered the surplus, raised fees and taxes another \$10 billion and grew govern-



Bobbie Harder

ment by nearly 40%. There was little to no tax relief. We are now facing a deficit in the next few years and people are seeing their family budgets hit hard by new taxes. In a deficit, we need to look at reducing unnecessary spending and programs that are not benefiting Minnesotans.

As a legislator, how would you address concerns regarding healthcare for Minnesota residents? We can make healthcare more affordable by promoting competition among providers, which lowers costs and improves quality. Increasing transparency by requiring price disclosures will allow consumers to make informed decisions about their care. Expanding access to care through telemedicine and reducing regulatory barriers can help reach underserved areas of our state.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should Minnesota do to see that private sector businesses can start and grow? We should lower business taxes to encourage investment and expansion here at home. Simplifying regulations will reduce costs and delays for businesses, and investing in infrastructure, like transportation and broadband access, supports local businesses and attracts new ones. Supporting education and workforce training will also make Minnesota a better place for businesses.

What, if anything, should be done to increase transparency of government in Minnesota? Government transparency will be a big issue in the next biennium, because it's one of the most effective ways to tackle fraud. We must demand that agency employees are held accountable for fraud, especially when nearly a billion dollars are lost to fraud in just the last three years. It's essential that we get fraud under control and stop funding fraudsters.

What changes, if any, are needed regarding Minnesota's environmental policy and permitting? Minnesota needs to balance environmental protection with economic growth. Streamlining permitting processes to make

them more efficient, without compromising environmental standards, is one way to achieve this. Encouraging innovation by supporting technologies that reduce environmental impact can also help. Taking a collaborative approach by working with businesses, communities, and environmental groups will allow us to find practical solutions that benefit both the economy and the environment.

What is your opinion of the Metropolitan Council? What reforms, if any, are needed?

The Metropolitan Council holds significant influence but lacks direct accountability, so reforms are necessary to increase that. One way of doing this could be by increasing oversight by elected officials that would ensure the council represents the interests of the people. We could also limit its scope to focus on essential regional services and reducing overreach.

In a Pew Research Center poll this year, 86% of Americans responding agreed with the statement, "Republicans and Democrats are more focused on fighting each other than on solving problems." With that in mind, outline your best idea for increasing bipartisanship to solve Minnesota's biggest problems.

To increase bipartisanship, we need to bring balance back into state government. When the state is run by one party, it eliminates the need for bipartisanship, which we saw in the runaway budget and skyrocketing taxes of the last few years. With a divided government, we bring back the need to work together and listen to all voices, instead of just the ones with a narrow majority in the Legislature.

Where do you envision the State of Minnesota in the next five to 10 years?

If the Democrat trifecta is left in place for the next two years, I'm concerned with the long-term outlook of our state. I would anticipate higher taxes, radical bills like the sanctuary state proposal becoming law, and more spending increases in the face of a looming deficit. If we restore balance to the state government, we can get our state back on track by tackling issues such as affordability, education, public safety, rampant fraud and more. With balanced government, we can make sure that we pass bills that are good for all Minnesotans.

"If the Democrat trifecta is left in place for the next two years, I'm concerned with the long-term outlook of our state. I would anticipate higher taxes, radical bills like the sanctuary state proposal becoming law, and more spending increases in the face of a looming deficit. ... With balanced government, we can make sure that we pass bills that are good for all Minnesotans."

-- Bobbie Harder



House District 17B Candidates

Name: Jennifer Nuesse

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Email address: jnuesse@icloud.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Arlington since 2009 (15 years)

Previous leadership experience: Professional experience in middle-management in corporate business, 24 years.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? City of Arlington: City Council 2013-16 (one term); various city commissions in Arlington: Planning and Zoning, Economic Development Authority, Community Center Cemetery Committee. Sibley County DFL: vice chair, 2022-current. DFL Senate District 17: Director (2024).

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I retired in January 2024 after 38 years working with corporations in management roles and other positions. Experience such as collaboration, problem-solving and compromise will be beneficial for seeking common ground with fellow lawmakers. Upon deciding to run for public office, I filed as a candidate and aligned with the DFL Red to Blue Caucus for other state house candidates in greater Minnesota. Using resources such as county party units and volunteers, we have attended fairs, festivals and parades to publicize my candidacy. I sought and received endorsements from organizations whose values agree with the DFL in Minnesota. Through door-knocking, advertising on social media and billboards, we are creating as many touchpoints as possible for residents to learn about my position on important issues.

What do you view as the three top priorities for Minnesota and how would you address these?

1. Urgently help family farmers to prosper: Without the crops and livestock they produce for our sustenance, our rural economy will be depleted and anyone who relies on food produced in Minnesota will need to look elsewhere for their supply. We could create grant programs and allocate more resources for county extension offices to properly help support our agricultural industry at its roots.
2. Family-sustaining wages -- support the growth of unions to improve working conditions and raise the threshold for minimum income for working families. This will enable them to better afford childcare, healthcare, and eldercare as needed.
3. Stronger public schools -- seek better ways to assure availability of funds to Greater Minnesota schools that are impacted by rising costs and staff shortages.

Polls show that Minnesota residents view the economy as a major concern. What specific actions or approaches should state lawmakers take to address the concern? Aside from funds made available through national government entities, we should utilize task forces with input from citizens, business leaders, institutions of learning, and local government to identify areas that can be promptly addressed. Long-term remedies are more challenging and



Jennifer Nuesse

will rely on creating new ways to raise revenue and cut costs so that our lawmakers may pass meaningful legislation.

For the years when Minnesota has budget surpluses, do you favor increased investing in government programs or tax relief? If the state has a budget deficit, how would you balance the state's budget -- cut spending or increase taxes? I believe that tax relief has a more immediate impact on Minnesota's residents. However, it is also imperative to invest in government programs for the betterment of our social and public services, improvements in infrastructure, and retention of family farms. Should there be a budget deficit, it may be necessary to do both: Cut spending and increase taxes.

As a legislator, how would you address concerns regarding healthcare for Minnesota residents? MinnesotaCare may be expanded to have greater outreach. Increases in cost for basic healthcare must be curbed so that families do not have to select other needs above medical care. I also believe that Minnesota could attract quality health professionals in the face of changes with reproductive rights across other states.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should Minnesota do to see that private sector businesses can start and grow? Private sector business may rely more heavily on investments in higher education to produce a more substantial workforce. Some private businesses in our locale have established programs to intern / hire in advance those trained in skilled trades. Public schools may be funded better to revive train-to-work courses that were eliminated in previous budget cuts.

What, if anything, should be done to increase transparency of government in Minnesota? Social media is likely one of the best ways to show what is happening in state government.

What changes, if any, are needed regarding

Minnesota's environmental policy and permitting? I think we are moving in the right direction. I am familiar with active projects to eliminate all lead piping in water supplies and similar programs must be adopted. Perhaps better education and increased resources for counties and cities will enable them to address issues of policy and permitting at a local level.

What is your opinion of the Metropolitan Council? What reforms, if any, are needed? I live in Sibley County, outside of the seven-county metro area. I believe that reform IS needed. Many families here must travel to the Metro Area for work, childcare and healthcare since our options for these have dwindled. Revenue from spending outside of our locale is not being realized in our area nor other parts of Greater Minnesota. It would be helpful if Local Government Aid distributed to communities could be more fair in allocation.

In a Pew Research Center poll this year, 86% of Americans responding agreed with the statement, "Republicans and Democrats are more focused on fighting each other than on solving problems." With that in mind, outline your best idea for increasing bipartisanship to solve Minnesota's biggest problems. My best idea is not new: Learn to respect each other, work together, and pass laws that are meaningful to Minnesotans.

Where do you envision the State of Minnesota in the next five to 10 years? I believe that Minnesota should remain as a good model for public services, civil rights, reproductive freedoms, a sanctuary state, and management of climate change. We should work hard to retain or attract businesses in order to draw more residents to our state so that we may continue to help our residents prosper.

"Experience such as collaboration, problem-solving and compromise will be beneficial for seeking common ground with fellow lawmakers. Upon deciding to run for public office, I filed as a candidate and aligned with the DFL Red to Blue Caucus for other state house candidates in greater Minnesota. Using resources such as county party units and volunteers, we have attended fairs, festivals and parades to publicize my candidacy."

-- Jennifer Nuesse



House District 48A Candidates

Name: Nathan (Nate) Kells

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Email address: nkfor48a@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Cologne, MN – 7 years

Previous leadership experience: Cologne City Councilmember, Cologne Academy School Board member, University of Minnesota P&A Senator

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? American Public Gardens Association Board of Directors

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I've actively engaged with the community to understand their needs, attended local events to build relationships, and researched key issues facing our district. My commitment to transparency and collaboration will ensure I represent our constituents effectively, advocating for policies that promote growth and enhance quality of life - specifically for District 48A - but also for the entire state of Minnesota.

What do you view as the three top priorities for Minnesota and how would you address these? Through research and personal conversations, the following are just a few of the priorities citizens of 48A have discussed - Affordable Healthcare: I would advocate for expanded access to affordable healthcare options, including supporting public health initiatives and exploring partnerships with local providers to ensure every Minnesotan can receive necessary care. Education Funding: I aim to increase funding for public schools, focusing on equitable resources for all districts, improving teacher support, and enhancing vocational training programs to prepare students for the workforce. Environmental Sustainability: I would promote policies that protect our natural resources, support renewable energy initiatives, and encourage sustainable practices in agriculture and industry to ensure a healthy environment for future generations.

Polls show that Minnesota residents view the economy as a major concern. What specific actions or approaches should state lawmakers take to address the concern? To address economic concerns, I believe we should focus on increasing the minimum wage to ensure a living wage for all workers, investing in small businesses through grants and low-interest loans, and expanding access to affordable childcare to support working families. Additionally, prioritizing job training programs and supporting clean energy initiatives can create sustainable jobs while fostering economic growth and resilience.

For the years when Minnesota has budget surpluses, do you favor increased investing in government programs or tax relief? If the State has a budget deficit, how would you balance the state's budget -- cut spending or increase taxes? I favor prioritizing tax relief for residents and businesses. Lowering taxes encourages economic growth, boosts consumer spending, and provides families with more control over their finances. This approach stim-



Nathan Kells

ulates the economy while allowing citizens to keep more of their hard-earned money. In times of budget deficits, my focus would be on cutting unnecessary spending rather than increasing taxes. It's essential to review and prioritize state programs, ensuring that we eliminate waste and promote efficiency. By tightening our budget and focusing on essential services, we can balance the budget without placing additional burdens on taxpayers. Ultimately, a fiscally responsible approach involves both rewarding taxpayers in surplus years and maintaining discipline during deficits, ensuring that Minnesota remains a place where businesses and families can thrive.

As a legislator, how would you address concerns regarding healthcare for Minnesota residents? I would focus on expanding Medicaid, lowering prescription drug costs, and increasing access to telehealth services. Additionally, I'd prioritize funding for mental health initiatives and preventive care programs to ensure all Minnesotans have access to affordable, quality healthcare and improve overall community health outcomes.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should Minnesota do to see that private sector businesses can start and grow? To foster a competitive business climate, Minnesota should reduce regulatory burdens, streamline the permitting process, and lower taxes for small businesses. Additionally, investing in workforce development and supporting infrastructure improvements will create an environment where private sector businesses can thrive, innovate, and contribute to the state's economic growth.

What, if anything, should be done to increase transparency of government in Minnesota? To increase government transparency in Minne-

sota, we should implement several key measures. First, enhancing access to public records through an easy-to-navigate online portal would empower citizens to stay informed. Second, requiring regular public reporting on budget allocations and spending would hold officials accountable. Third, conducting open town hall meetings can encourage community engagement and foster direct communication between lawmakers and constituents. Lastly, instituting a "transparency rating" for state agencies can incentivize them to improve their practices. These steps will build trust and ensure that residents have the information they need to engage actively in the democratic process.

What changes, if any, are needed regarding Minnesota's environmental policy and permitting? Minnesota's environmental policy could benefit from streamlined permitting processes to promote efficiency while maintaining strong environmental protections. Emphasizing collaborative efforts with local communities and businesses can ensure that regulations are both effective and economically viable. Additionally, increasing investment in renewable energy projects and sustainable practices will support innovation and job creation. Finally, enhancing public education on environmental stewardship can empower residents to participate actively in protecting our natural resources for future generations.

What is your opinion of the Metropolitan Council? What reforms, if any, are needed? The Metropolitan Council plays a crucial role in regional planning, but it needs reform to enhance accountability and transparency. Engaging more directly with local communities can improve responsiveness to their needs. Additionally, clarifying its governance structure would help ensure that decisions reflect the diverse interests of all residents.

In a Pew Research Center poll this year, 86% of Americans responding agreed with the statement, "Republicans and Democrats are more focused on fighting each other than on solving problems." With that in mind, outline your best idea for increasing bipartisanship to solve Minnesota's biggest problems. In a Pew Research Center poll this year, 86% of Americans responding agreed with the statement, "Republicans and Democrats are more focused on fighting each other than on solving problems." With that in mind, outline your best idea for increasing bipartisanship to solve Minnesota's biggest problems.

Where do you envision the State of Minnesota in the next five to 10 years? In the next five to 10 years, I envision Minnesota as a vibrant, inclusive state with a robust economy driven by innovation and sustainable practices. We will have strengthened our education system, providing all students with the skills needed for the future workforce. Healthcare will be more accessible and affordable, ensuring every resident can receive quality care. Additionally, I foresee thriving communities that prioritize environmental stewardship and clean energy. By fostering collaboration between government, businesses, and citizens, Minnesota will be a model for effective governance, resilience, and quality of life, attracting new residents and opportunities.



House District 48A Candidates

Name: Jim Nash

Website: www.jimnashformn.com

Email address: Nash.jim@gmail.com

Home community and how long have you lived in your community: Waconia for 22 years

Previous leadership experience: Current State Representative and Caucus Whip 10 years. Mayor of Waconia 4 years. Waconia City Council 2 years. Sr Vice President in business, owner of my own consulting company.

In what community, state, or national organizations have you been involved? Board Member of Ridgeview Hospital, Trustee on Crown College Board, Board Member on Metro State Cyber Range board, Board member on NCSL CyberSecurity Task Force. Many others

How have you prepared to serve well in this office: I have served in office for several years and have worked to provide for our community by investing in infrastructure, lessening tax burdens, working to protect domestic abuse victims via legislation, requiring greater standards be used to place Level 3 sex offenders in communities, supporting law enforcement and working with any and all constituents and fellow law makers to do what is helpful for our community.

What do you view as the three top priorities for Minnesota and how would you address these? 1. The economic situation Minnesotans find themselves in is a result of overspending and high taxation. Families are suffering because of inflation and less disposable income. We need to provide tax relief to families and small businesses. 2. Education test scores have been falling in Minnesota. Many students aren't reading at grade level, nor are they all graduating in four years from High School. There are now more chronically absent/truant students than before. Funding schools is important, but not overburdening them with the 70+ mandates that happened in the last two years will allow them to spend money on teaching and only teaching. 3. Housing: I've worked in housing issues at the Capitol for years and have tried to make it easier for people to achieve the dream of home ownership. Minnesota is 106,000 houses undersupplied and we need to ease burdensome and non-safety/structural integrity regulations to spur building to close the inventory gap Minnesota suffers from.

Polls show that Minnesota residents view the economy as a major concern. What specific actions or approaches should state lawmakers take to address the concern? Minnesota has the 4th highest personal income tax rate in the country and THE highest business tax rate in the country. Currently, families are being crushed by these realities and can't afford gasoline, groceries, or even as several constituents have told me that they couldn't afford all the back-to-school supplies recommended for their students. We must always remember that families and residents come first. The DFL legislature grew government by 40% in the last two years alone. I know of no family budget



Jim Nash

that grew by 40%. This is a high priority for me to provide tax relief.

For the years when Minnesota has budget surpluses, do you favor increased investing in government programs or tax relief? If the State has a budget deficit, how would you balance the state's budget -- cut spending or increase taxes? For years we have had a budget surplus, but we are looking at a structural deficit in 2025 due to government growing by 40% in the last two years. Certainly we need to invest in critical infrastructure and I have voted to do that. But, growth at 40% is unsustainable and reckless. There are ways to deliver great services to Minnesota without growing government. Thoughtfully looking at costs of government and duplicative services is something we can achieve to overcome the pending deficit.

As a legislator, how would you address concerns regarding healthcare for Minnesota residents? By providing a competitive marketplace to drive costs down, driving transparency in pricing, and by working to avoid a government run healthcare system. Carver County has one of the greatest hospitals in the state in Ridgeview but that hospital sees excessive regulations layered upon it and we must make it so that our healthcare system is safe and nimble but also able to grow and lead itself instead of being mandated into oblivion.

If a competitive business climate is important to you, what should Minnesota do to see that private sector businesses can start and grow? I am a strong advocate for competitive markets. In a free market economy, high taxes, forced government regulations like paid family medical leave, and other expensive programs will cause businesses to leave our state or as

the Mayo Clinic threatened that they would no expand their businesses in Minnesota and do so elsewhere.

What, if anything, should be done to increase transparency of government in Minnesota? A. I have been a leader in driving greater transparency in state government and have been able to pass legislation to do that every year I've served. This last biennium alone I passed a bill to make the IT Agency in MN drive cost transparency while serving in the Minority. B. The waste, fraud and abuse in Minnesota that has made headlines around the country need to be met head on. In the last four years, we have seen more than \$500,000,000 in waste, fraud and abuse. Creating higher standards of funding and greater scrutiny will alleviate the criminal fraud we have seen.

What changes, if any, are needed regarding Minnesota's environmental policy and permitting? The permitting process should insure our natural resources are protected, preserved for our future, and also work for businesses to safely grow. Providing a balanced and streamlined approach to permitting can allow both business to expand and provide jobs, and protect our beautiful state.

What is your opinion of the Metropolitan Council? What reforms, if any, are needed? The Metropolitan Council needs reform in order to avoid the problems we've seen it create with things like SWM Light Rail. It is an unelected board with taxing authority. Changing that is both important and is now viewed as a widely bipartisan effort. This would benefit our state.

In a Pew Research Center poll this year, 86% of Americans responding agreed with the statement, "Republicans and Democrats are more focused on fighting each other than on solving problems." With that in mind, outline your best idea for increasing bipartisanship to solve Minnesota's biggest problems. I think bipartisanship is important, and actually this last year worked well with the DFL Public Safety chair to pass two landmark bills. One was to increase the criteria for placement of Level 3 sex offenders in a community (addressing the problem in Victoria in years past), and the second bill was one reflective of my childhood as an abused child by requiring mandatory reporters to not deflect reports that are made. This bill required me to work closely with the DFL and to be bipartisan. There are many things that we do indeed work together on, but aren't always reported in the news. We do though owe it to constituents to work together on as many things as we can, and should seek those opportunities out.

Where do you envision the State of Minnesota in the next 5 to 10 years? Minnesota is a great state and has been a leader for years, but we are slipping in education, business favorability, tax rates, high inflation, and heavy regulatory mandates. If we can address these issues on behalf of its citizens, I see a bright future for Minnesota to return to being a great place to live, start a business, raise a family, and enjoy our natural resources.



Chanhassen Ballot Measure

CITY QUESTION 1 (Chanhassen)

Sales and Use Tax for Chanhassen Bluffs Community Center

Shall the City of Chanhassen impose a one-half of one percent (0.5%) sales and use tax for up to 20 years or until \$40 million is collected, plus the cost of issuing bonds, to finance the construction of a new Chan Rec Center, which is expected to include an indoor walking track, indoor ice facilities, indoor playground, indoor fieldhouse, and expanded community center amenities, as outlined in the Chanhassen Bluffs Community Center project plan?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: [General Information](#) -- [Cost Estimates](#) -- [FAQs](#)



Minnesota Constitutional Amendment

Voters will have the following constitutional amendment ballot instructions and question on their ballot on November 5, 2024:

Failure to vote on a constitutional amendment will have the same effect as voting no on the amendment.

To vote for a proposed constitutional amendment, fill in the oval next to the word “Yes” on that question. To vote against a proposed constitutional amendment, fill in the oval next to the word “No” on that question.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Renewal

Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to protect drinking water sources and the water quality of lakes, rivers, and streams; conserve wildlife habitat and natural areas; improve air quality; and expand access to parks and trails by extending the transfer of proceeds from the state-operated lottery to the environment and natural resources trust fund, and to dedicate the proceeds for these purposes?



