



City of Ferrysburg Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Rebecca Hopp

Employer: Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

**Please feel free to attach a separate sheet if the space provided is not sufficient.*

General

1. What qualifications/experience do you feel you possess that will enable you to fulfill the responsibilities of the elected office you are seeking?

I graduated from Grand Valley State University with degrees in education and sports medicine. I am also certified Reality Therapist, and hold a certification for Non-Profit Boards. I have been employed by Michigan Public Schools for over 17 years with experiences in; alternative education/outward bound, special education, taught GED coursework, and currently employed with the OAISD Career-line Tech Center. I'm so proud to be able to educate America's next generation of leaders.

In 2009, I earned by seat on council as a write-in candidate and currently serving as Mayor Pro-Tem. I presently serve on several boards and commissions; Ferrysburg Board of Review, Ferrysburg Recreation Commission, Tri-Cities Historical Museum, 4 Points- Council of the Aging, Secretary for Ottawa County Land Bank Authority, President of Michigan Women in Municipal Government, Pres/Vice Pres Elected Official Academy, and past Board of Trustee for Michigan Municipal League. In March 2017, I became the 7th elected official in the state of Michigan to receive the Ambassador Leadership award. Additionally, I am an active volunteer serving in many different capacities throughout the Tri-City area; Co-Founder/Co-Chair of Smith's Bayou Chili Cook-off, Grand Haven Area Chamber, serving Ferrysburg's 4th of July Mayor's Breakfast, Feeding America food distribution, serving the annual Marine Corp. breakfast each November, spreading bark on the trails in KLH Dunes, and I painted the front porch roof at City Hall.

2. Have you ever run for political office before? If yes, please explain.

November, 2009 I as a write-in candidate, earning my seat over a defense attorney. In November, 2013 I ran unopposed for my current council seat and my fellow council members elected me as their Mayor Pro-Tem in 2014. As Mayor Pro-Tem, I have been very active in this role as our current Mayor is out of town for extended lengths of time.

3. If elected, what would be your top priorities and why?

I believe the two top priorities for the City of Ferrysburg are Smith's Bridge and the Ferrysburg's aging infrastructure/lift stations. These items could be very costly for the city but we must seek viable options with the goal to minimize the cost to our residents. Additionally, the Short Term Rent (STR) ordinance is currently with the Planning Commission, and hope to present their findings to city council later this year. My goal is for the STR ordinance to ensure FAIRNESS for all stakeholders.

4. What is your vision for the next 10 years for the City and how will your leadership help accomplish that vision?

Ferrysburg is a small and unique city with so many natural resources, dunes and waterfront. As a dedicated mayor to our residents, business owners, visitors, and future residents, I will continue to focus on transparency and financial stewardship to ensure a quality of living for all. Additionally, I want to continue working for inclusion and accessibility for everyone to enjoy this true gem of the Tri-Cities

Economic Development, Tax and General Policy

1. As Mayor what do you consider your role in retaining and attracting new business and industry to the City?

Ferrysburg's limited open space and lack of re-development sites places Ferrysburg in a position unlike area municipalities. Due to the limited acreage sites to attract industries, I would continue working closely with the Grand Haven Chamber and their resources to assist Ferrysburg for the best fit possibilities to maintain Ferrysburg's quaint city. Gracious Grounds will be developing the acreage east of our current city hall with the goal to become inclusive with city residents and business owners. Additionally, Ferrysburg recently welcomed Gateway Church into our community. I will work closely assist with local businesses and employees to retain the talented work force each moving part is a critical attribute to maintaining the health and vitality of our city.

2. What is the number one challenge facing business growth and development in the City?

Ferrysburg's limited open space and limited re-development sites places Ferrysburg in a position unlike area municipalities. This is where our chamber can be utilized to in assisting our community.

3. What is the number one area that the City should invest in financially?

Ferrysburg's aging infrastructure (lift stations) and Smith's Bridge will be the two largest financial commitments Ferrysburg leaders will need to diligent financial stewards to develop/create the avenues to prepare for these expenditures. Council will explore all options available to assist with this expenditure.

4. Do you support the use of tax abatements and /or special tax incentives to create jobs and spur economic growth? Why or why not?

Yes, as tax abatements have provided financial relief to businesses in other areas, resulting in positive growth in those cities and towns. However, Ferrysburg's limited industrial growth capabilities prohibits most manufactures from even considering expanding into our city. However, Ferrysburg is a city where growth is possible and I believe special tax incentives could possibly be a viable option for the leaders of Ferrysburg to consider at that time. All options to support growth in a community need to be explored to determine the best fit for our residents, community and the future business partners.

5. As we move to a more regional community and in the face of continued fiscal constraints, what are your thoughts on consolidation of services (police, fire, schools, transportation to name a few)?

In the past, Ferrysburg and Spring Lake Village Police Department were one entity. Due to a continued increase of service costs and legacy expenses, the Ferrysburg/Spring Lake Village Police Department dissolved. However, the two communities worked diligently with the Ottawa County Sheriff Department to create and our current police force of amazing officers who serve and protect our communities 24 hours a day. Additionally, Harbor Transit is a regional transportation service providing our residents door-to-door service throughout the Tri-Cities area. The Ferrysburg Fire Department is a crucial department to maintain for our city. Our fire department frequently assists other municipalities as needed but consolidation has not been discussed at this time. The area's two large public school systems run well and are extremely dedicated to their communities-- a consolidation option would be very difficult for these two separate entities. The Tri-Cities collaborate in many different facets of government and community services to best support our residents, businesses and future growth.

Talent Attraction

1. Local business and industry has identified that barriers to growth are lack of affordable housing, regional public transportation and qualified employees. As Mayor, what role would you provide in helping to address these issues?

As Mayor, providing a personal conversation with all stakeholders is critical as specific needs can be addressed then create the goals and objectives to meet these needs. Serving on the Ottawa County Land Bank Authority and the Ottawa County Housing Coalition, affordable housing is one of the major barriers facing our communities. Ferrysburg's affordable housing is currently limited but the option to explore other avenues is a critical need moving forward. Welcoming talented employees to the Tri-Cities Area is the future for our communities. Ferrysburg's partnership with the Grand Haven Chamber is a viable partnership to creating a vibrant community for our all residents, both current and future. As a secondary educator, I am so proud to educate America's next generation of leaders!

Environmental Policy

1. How would you suggest green space be preserved while at the same time sustaining economic development and growth?

As Mayor, providing a personal conversation with all stakeholders is critical, as specific needs can be addressed. We'll then create the goals and objectives necessary to meet these needs. I serve on the Ottawa County Land Bank Authority and have served on the Ottawa County Housing Coalition, and affordable housing is one of the major barriers facing our communities. Ferrysburg's affordable housing is currently limited and exploring other avenues is a critical need moving forward. Welcoming talented employees to the Tri-Cities Area is the future for our communities. Ferrysburg's partnership with the Grand Haven Chamber is an outstanding collaboration that helps create a vibrant community for all residents, both current and future.

The city of Ferrysburg consists of three square miles with green space accounting for over one square mile. Ferrysburg's leaders and residents have enjoyed the many different natural resources available in our small town. Due to our small size and very minimal available space for industrial growth, Ferrysburg's economic development options are a continued challenge. By collaborating with developers and businesses to redesign existing lots, or lots which may come up for sale, we can meet financial needs as well, while adhering to the city's ordinances and zoning codes.

Transportation Infrastructure

1. In your opinion, what role do you think local/state government may play in further expanding the regional transportation services throughout West Michigan?

Local, regional, and state governmental agencies are critical players in the design a functional, regional transportation system, along with current and future employees working in the area. Transportation is the fundamental component to an individual's freedom to be able to move to and from communities and points of interest-- connecting West Michigan through mass transit would lift special limits on people with all abilities and interests. Currently, a regional design has connected Grand Valley's Allendale campus to their campus in Grand Rapids, which allows greater accommodations and opportunities. Additionally, the lakeshore is a beautiful area which should be shared by all and not be limited due to the lack of public transportation.

Please attach additional information regarding your community and business affiliations.

The role of Mayor for the City of Ferrysburg must be a person who represents all the people of Ferrysburg. A mayor needs to allow all points of views to be heard without prejudice to maintain order and respectability between the public and council members. Also, the council members must be respectful to the public and each other.