



## Grand Haven Board of Light & Power Questionnaire

Name: Andrea Hendrick

Phone: 616-218-7669

Email: andrea@andrehendrick.com

Employer: I Site Consulting Group

Office Being Sought:

Grand Haven Board of Light & Power Trustee



**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 believe my professional background, paired with my genuine passion for the future of this community, makes me the ideal candidate for the Board of Light & Power (BLP). While attending Grand Valley State University, my education exposed me to many issues within the energy sector. Now as a planning professional, it is my job to see a project through from the conceptual stage all the way to the day the doors open. This includes navigating complicated regulatory requirements, working with neighbors to ensure people are genuinely heard, maintaining healthy working relationships, and ensuring that businesses continue to thrive. These are precisely the skills needed to be an effective and responsive Grand Haven Board of Light and Power Trustee.

I am well versed in the issues the BLP faces right now. I have attended almost every Board meeting for the last 1.5 years and helped organize a group of citizens to be more active in local energy policy decisions. Additionally, I know that my role as a BLP Trustee is not only to bring my knowledge to the table, but to listen and learn from the collective knowledge of my community and make sure that is reflected in the BLP plans moving forward.

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

No.

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

**Transparency:** If elected, I will work with my fellow Trustees to foster a culture of Transparency. The Board of Light and Power is publicly owned utility that should listen to the desires of the community. Unfortunately, the Board of Light and Power has missed the opportunity to learn from the collective knowledge of the community. If I am elected, I will ensure that the BLP regularly engages in constructive discussions with residents, commercial customers, our important industrial businesses, and our city government.

**Affordability:** We can work with the Michigan Public Power Agency to choose where and how our energy is generated. As a trustee, I will pay close attention to the Michigan market trends. We will not make unnecessary capital investments that jeopardize our electrical rates. I will also work to ensure that the Board of Light & Power significantly increases its focus on reducing energy consumption by enhancing energy efficiency programs and provides customer incentives for off-peak consumption.

If elected, I will work collaboratively with other board members and BLP staff to reorient the way we think about power consumption and generation. If done correctly, we can not only maintain but possibly reduce energy rates.

**Sustainability:** The Board of Light and Power should participate in a broad discussion of the overall sustainability of Grand Haven's infrastructure. If I am elected, I will work for the adoption of a Community Sustainability Plan that will include a comprehensive index of our utility infrastructure. Without this plan, it is virtually impossible to determine what issues are the most pressing for our community and more importantly, where the most vulnerable populations truly lie. When tackling issues this complicated, it is important that we have all stakeholders at the table, including residents, commercial and industrial businesses, other city departments, the medical community, the emergency services, among others.

**4. Please provide information regarding your knowledge of municipal power.**

I learned a lot about general power generation through family members who were union tradesmen working on different forms of power. I travelled around the state while they made modifications to coal and nuclear power plants. As a very young adult, I have travelled to the Ukraine and learned about the Chernobyl disaster. I could not actually visit the city for obvious reasons, but it gave me a somber understanding of how careful we need to be with choices of energy production. I would ask questions over dinner about how people could make "coal clean." I was told that "bag houses" would remove harmful byproducts of coal combustion from going into the air. When I asked what happen to the waste that was collected, I was told that it was placed on the ground next to the plant. While that disturbed me, it wasn't until year later, while studying urban and regional sustainable planning that I really began to grasp the gravity of the danger our country faced if we didn't change our practices.

When the SIMS plant was decommission, I had a strong interest in seeing what the future of power would look like in Grand Haven. I did not anticipate the amount of time I would spend studying how public power is purchased and sold, regulated, or how the value of power was determined. I joined a group of concerned citizens who were hoping that the City would include the public in power decision, however we have been

stonewalled and dismissed for the last 18 months while the Board of Light and Power has moved forward plans without engagement from the community. That is my generally knowledge of municipal power, and I believe that my election to this board could bring a unique perspective that is not represented with the current BLP Trustees or Trustee candidates.

**5. What are your top three priorities for the Board of Light & Power for the next 6 years?**

- 1) Revisit the current policies and procedures regarding transparency, accountability, and community engagement at the Board of Light & Power.
- 2) Work with my fellow Board members to ask the City to complete a comprehensive index of City utilities, and develop a community sustainability plan that defines the value of non-cash factors such as public health, social impact, and environment, as well as the financial implication of our decisions.
- 3) Revisit the Harbor Island Master Plan and Five- Year Strategic Plan to ensure they reflect the concerns and desires of the community and implement them.

**6. Reliability and competitive rates are critical to not only manufacturers but to all customers of the BLP. If elected, how will you work with the board to insure both are a priority.**

In order to continue to ensure energy reliability, the Board of Light and Power should participate in a broad discussion of the overall sustainability of Grand Haven's infrastructure. If I am elected, I will work for the adoption of a Community Sustainability Plan that will include a comprehensive index of our utility infrastructure. Without this plan, it is virtually impossible to determine what issues are the most pressing for our community and more importantly, where the most vulnerable populations truly lie. When tackling issues this complicated, it is important that we have all stakeholders at the table, including residents, commercial and industrial businesses, other city departments, the medical community, the emergency services, among others. Once complete, we can begin to formulate what energy infrastructure should look like for the BLP service area.

Local ratepayers have been "buying off the grid" for over a year. In that time, the Board of Light and Power has done an amazing job making needed repairs to our local distribution system. Additionally, they have also increased revenue. This has been prudent management on the part of the BLP staff. They should be commended for their work. We should continue buying power through the MPPA marketplace while we develop a plan similar to the plans of other lakeshore communities. It should include allowance and planning for new technology, as well as continued partnerships in joint projects with other municipalities through the Michigan Public Power Agency. We should look to other communities, such as Traverse City, that have done this while also working to actually implement aggressive, yet realistic renewable energy goals as determined by the community.