



Ottawa County Commissioner Candidate Questionnaire

District # 1 (Please insert your district number)

Name: **Gretchen Cosby**

Employer:

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**Please note this is a fillable word document for your convenience.*

1. Why are you running for office? **The current County Commissioners, with the exception of Kyle Terpstra, have not been listening to their constituents, the people that elected them, the people they serve. Over 1000 parents showed up to an August 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting, with objective data, requesting that the County Commissioners not mask their children for 2021 school year. I reviewed the County Commissioner website and role expectations, compared the role expectations to my work history and decided, it was time to step-up, share my experience and serve my community in a different capacity, as county commissioner.**
2. Have you ever run for political office before? If yes, please explain. **No**
3. What qualifications/experience do you feel you possess that will enable you to fulfill the responsibilities of the elected office you are seeking? **I have 30 years of experience as a nurse, who has worked both at the bedside and in administrative roles. I have had responsibility for approximately 200 direct reports, and I have led, multi-departmental strategy, planning and budgetary responsibilities. I have developed and implemented large change processes that improve patient outcomes, efficiencies in work, and time and decrease cost to patients.**
4. If elected, what would be your top priorities and why?
Health Department evaluation of responsibilities and roles: What was Medical Directors role in Ottawa County's COVID response? As a trauma trained, Emergency Room nurse, I have received FEMA Emergency Preparedness training and worked closely with the Ottawa County Health Department during the COVID outbreak when I lead operations for Holland Hospital COVID testing center in February of 2020.
Food security and the current plight of the farmers in our county, fuel prices have doubled, fertilizer cost are 300% higher than last year, aquifers are being compromised by new growth in population and new government programs require farmers to provide monthly reporting and specific management of soil and crops. Independent farmers are threatened and so is the US food supply.
5. Ottawa is blessed with diverse economic sectors: agriculture, tourism, industrial and commercial. For each of these, what do you think are the issues they will encounter in the next 2 years? If elected, how will you support each of these sectors? **Each of these sectors will share one challenge over the next two years and that is a labor shortage. A great deal has been done to make Ottawa County a great place to live, we should continue to attract people here and make every effort to train them to participate in the workforce and community.**

6. Safety for all citizens is a protection we expect. If elected, how will you ensure that the Ottawa County Sherriff's Department, Ottawa County Health Department and Ottawa County Court system equally and fairly provides safety to all residents? **According to a township board member, Ottawa County Jail population is down by almost 50%. I do see (subjective) more shootings and stabbings in our community, and I am wondering why the inmate population has been reduced so significantly. I will spend time learning more about what is driving the decrease jail population, has crime decreased? Is there a policy change that is driving the change?**

7. Ottawa County is financially more secure than many other Michigan counties. This is due to previous boards and administrations wisely spending and saving revenues. If elected, what will be your spending priorities for county dollars? **I have led successful budget planning for healthcare systems, and I would like to learn more about what specifically, Ottawa County boards and administrations have implemented to realize savings for the county.**

8. Ottawa County is one of the fastest growing counties in Michigan, attracting people from many cultures, ethnicities, and lifestyles to support the growth of businesses throughout the county, if elected, how will you support diversity, inclusion and equity at the county level. **I would never discriminate against anyone, nor prevent them from having opportunity based upon qualifications. At the end of the day, I believe that we have become a great community by simultaneously honoring all people and standing for excellence.**

If you have any endorsements, current or past community or business affiliations that you would like to share, please note below.