



Ottawa County Commissioner Candidate Questionnaire

District # __10__ (Please insert your district number)

Name: Thomas Elhart

Employer: Self Employed Real Estate Broker

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

1. Why are you running for office?

I have served on the Road Commission for 12 years.. I see a need for improvement at the County level

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 worked with the County and Townships for 12 years. I know how government works and doesn't work. Independent Business owner all my life.

Independent thinker...Not afraid to ask hard questions and vote even if I am in the minority

4. If elected, what would be your top priorities and why? Lowering taxes. Improving the relationship between the County and the Road Commission. Term limits for County Commissioners. Protecting property rights of land owners in Ottawa County. Reviewing all County programs.

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?

Agriculture: Water "rights"

Tourism: When people visit we sell ourselves and our communities.

Industrial. We need more Industrial land for our manufacturing base to grow in Grand Haven, Spring Lake and Ferrysburg.

Commercial: No vacant stores and great restaurants

And for all areas of the County: Sewer sludge Management. It is a big problem.

6. Safety for all citizens is a protection we expect. If elected, how will you ensure that the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department, Ottawa County Health Department and Ottawa County Court system equally and fairly provides safety to all residents?

I have contact with all three of these organizations...I am an advocate for the Sheriff's office. I support Mr Kempker and what he is doing. We need a court system that works. I am pro-prosecution for the choices people make. I would be an advocate for mental health including more beds for those who are in need.

Without laws and enforcement of those laws you have chaos.

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?
We are in better shape than most because of maintaining our quality of living and our employment base. The county received millions from the Federal Government. None of it is being spent on important infrastructure like roads and bridges which I know are in need of repair or replacement. I am not in favor of the spending that is happening now. For example, up to \$3,000 bonuses for county employees who many worked from home while the Fillmore Complex was virtually closed during covid were billed as “Hazard pay” or “Job retention pay” without a job retention contract while the Road Commission employees who had to work plowing your roads and maintaining your infrastructure received nothing. . I would review all County programs. It’s time to ask what the Ottawa County Taxpayer is really getting for their dollar and is it necessary.
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 believe the statement before the question is the answer..

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

Hope Graduate

Past Zeeland Rotary President

Chairman of the Ottawa County Road Commission

Past Zeeland Chamber President

Chairman of Ducks Unlimited