

Spring Lake Township Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Jerry Rabideau

Phone: 616-638-6963

E-mail: jrabideau@springlaketwp.org

Employer: Spring Lake Public Schools (Teacher)

Office Being Sought: Spring Lake Township Supervisor

**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?

- **Current Township Supervisor:** I am currently serving as the Spring Lake Township Supervisor, which has given me direct experience and insight into the responsibilities and challenges of this role.
- **Board of Trustees:** I have served on the Spring Lake Board of Trustees for six years, providing me with a solid foundation in local governance and community issues.
- **Education and Coaching:** With over 30 years of experience as a teacher and coach at Spring Lake Schools in football, track, and youth sports, I have developed strong leadership, mentoring, relationships and communication skills.
- **Law Enforcement:** My service as an Ottawa County Boat Sheriff has equipped me with a unique perspective on public safety and community service.

- **Community Leadership:** I served as a church leader, still serve on the state football board, demonstrating my commitment to leadership and community engagement.
- **Resident and Community Member:** Above all, I am a dedicated, nearly 40 year resident and community member, deeply concerned about maintaining strong communication, transparency and enhancing the quality of life in our township.

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

Yes, I was elected in 2016 and 2020 to the Spring Lake Township Board as a Trustee

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

Improving Communication:

- Even though our township is trending upward with better communication, we can still do better. In today's social environment, citizens expect quicker, more responsive ways to collect information. I would continue to implement regular town hall meetings, both in-person and virtually, to provide updates and gather feedback. Additionally, I would like to witness better enhanced digital presence by improving our website and utilizing social media to share important information and announcements promptly. We live in an age that citizens should expect and deserve quick response. It is essential that our board continues to listen and communicate better..

Protecting Open Spaces and Natural Areas:

- Our natural areas, wetlands, streams, and lakes need ongoing protection to preserve the environmental health and beauty of our area. I would advocate for stronger zoning laws and regulations to prevent overdevelopment and ensure sustainable land use. Partnering with local environmental organizations and seeking grants for conservation projects can help fund these initiatives. It is essential for the current and future boards to realize the vital importance of our area, recognizing the desires for development and affordable housing yet preserving quality land. Again, my objective is to have incredible community input on any and all future developments or master plan changes. There should never be a surprise to knowledge of change.

Improve Community Engagement:

I would like to see our township improve and obtain more community engagement. The implementation of a program like "Vision Force" could do just that. Vision Force is a program developed to foster better, quicker, more inclusive resident input. This initiative which all residents can be a member/attend will have a direct impact on what our community may look and feel like 20, 30 and even 50 years into the future. Our elected officials need to understand our community, develop communication strategies and most of all build trust. We need to collect and use real data from our citizens that will assist in decision making at the board level. Our board is responsible to the citizens, and we need to ensure our citizens are heard. If elected, you can be sure "Vision Force" will be a reality and residents will be heard and included.

Economic Development, General Policy and Transportation

1. Please describe your general economic development philosophy for Northwest Ottawa County.

I would like to see a holistic approach that aims to create a balanced, resilient, and prosperous economy that not only achieves growth but does so in a way that is sustainable and beneficial for all members of society.

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

I would be very careful and diligent in using abatements. It is a great tool to attract and build business, however at what point is there no return and continued loss of revenue. There must be a cap or a balance for a win/win scenario.

3. Affordability and availability of housing for many that earn between 80 and 120% Average Median Income (AMI) is a serious problem in our community. How would you address this barrier to residency?

So many factors go into accountability of affordable housing. Market Demand, Educational Opportunities, Community Base, Employment, among many other factors. In my opinion the market is determined by the environment. As an elected official I would like to cooperate with all parties to achieve affordable housing.

4. 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)?

Spring Lake Twp and Spring Lake Village is a poster example of combining forces/consolidated services and saving money. Both municipalities have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars with this effort over the years. This started long ago. In our current political turmoil, I am committed to continuing the relationship that we have with surrounding communities.

5. How would you propose to fund key community infrastructure needs that have been identified over the next three to seven years?

The county and state is responsible for the Lion's share of infrastructure. Seven or eight years ago, while I was on the board, we committed setting aside .01 mil a year for our infrastructure in the township. By doing this, we

have successfully saved many roads by doing surface treatments and we will continue to be fiscally responsible in that category.

1. The Township has experienced a historic growth rate of 50 new single-family homes per year for the last 20 years. Is that the right growth rate? Should it be more? Should it be less?

This statistic for SLT is a little high. We are not near 50, however it seems as if we are growing. Our growth rate is lower in our township than the county average as we are experiencing housing shortage everywhere. My goal is to ensure community dialogue when it comes to growth. This is why we started Vision Force in our Township. Community engagement will set the future standards of growth.

2. How important is manufacturing to the Township?

Manufacturing is about 15-18% of our tax base in SLT. It is substantial, but not our largest base. Homeowners are our largest base. It is my goal to establish long sustainable relationships with our manufacturing core assisting in any way I can. We have room for growth as we have space in our current industrialized zoning areas.