

City of Ferrysburg Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Bill Cate

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Employer: None

Office Being Sought: City of Ferrysburg – City Council

Please provide a brief biography, including your education, professional experience, and any previous public service or community involvement.

I am married to Paula, and we have two children, one close by and the other near Seattle, WA. Three of our grandchildren are near us, the other two live in Washington. I retired from the Air Force as a Master Sergeant in the Security Police in 1995, when I slowly transitioned to full time ministry in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. I retired from an active parish ministry in 2019 when we moved to Ferrysburg.

What motivated you to run for Council Member of Ferrysburg? My two careers included frequent moves (we've moved 21 times in 46 years of marriage), so getting involved in local government was a challenge, we got involved in our local church and other private organizations but never felt like I could commit to civic service. Retirement gives me the time I need to serve on a public level.

What skills or experiences uniquely qualify you for this role?

Most of my two careers have involved leadership and listening skills. You cannot pretend to lead without listening to people's needs and concerns.

What is your leadership style, and how do you plan to build consensus on City Council and with other local leaders?

I lead by example. I will not ask or direct someone to do anything I'm not willing to do myself. Building consensus is a challenge. There could be as many as seven different points of view on any issue facing City Council; all I can do is share my opinion on a subject. At the same time, I owe other council members the same courtesy.

How will you ensure transparency and accountability in city government?

This is above my pay grade...the Mayor, City Manager, and the various board and committee chairs are primarily responsible for this. All our meetings are open to the public and shared on the Ferrysburg City Council website. All the members of the City Council are aware of the requirements and restrictions of the Open Meeting Act and are careful not to violate them.

What role should the City Council play in engaging residents and ensuring their voices are heard?

All members of the public are encouraged to attend or view any meeting of the Council and all the boards and committees thereof. Our email addresses are published on the city website, and we welcome comments and questions from citizens.

Ferrysburg is known for its natural beauty and small-town character. How will you balance growth and development with preservation and sustainability?

I believe preservation and sustainability trumps growth and development. We're too small to pursue much in the way of development, either commercial or residential. While there are a few vacant parcels of land, I believe it is up to property owners and developers to investigate and pursue responsible use of such land.

How do you plan to support local businesses and economic development in Ferrysburg?

Same as above.

What are your thoughts on regional collaboration with neighboring municipalities like Grand Haven and Spring Lake?

As I indicated before, Ferrysburg is too small to attract much more in the way of growth so collaborative efforts with the surrounding communities are vital. The Harbor Transit Board, where I serve as Secretary, is a perfect example of community cooperation and collaboration.

How would you define success at the end of your city council term?

If the City consistently meets its goals and objectives year after year, I call that success.

Is there anything else you'd like voters to know about you or your candidacy?

There really isn't much more to share. However, it is a little disheartening to be running unopposed again for a seat on City Council. It's nice not to have to spend any money on a campaign, but discouraging not to see more interest in serving,