

# VOTER GUIDE – AUGUST PRIMARY ELECTION CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE

**Tuesday, August 4, 2020**  
POLLS ARE OPEN 7:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M.

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OAKLAND AREA

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You may VOTE in ONLY ONE PARTY'S PRIMARY - either Democratic or Republican – for ALL partisan offices on ballot.  
**Note: Candidates are ordered within each office by party with Democrats preceding Republicans.**

### 3 Candidates for TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR for ONE 4-year term

CANDIDATES for SUPERVISOR  ONE 4-year term <i>Vote for no more than ONE</i>	Question 1 (150 Words or less): Provide biographical information and explain why you are running for Township office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position.	Question 2 (150 Words or less): What are the top 3 Priority Issues facing your township and what actions would you, as a township official, take regarding each of them?
<p><i>Republican</i> <b>LARRY EUGENE GRAY, JR.</b> <i>(Write-in)</i> 2115 Glen Iris Ct. Commerce, MI 48382</p>	<p><b>DID NOT RESPOND IN TIME FOR INCLUSION</b></p>	
<p><i>Republican</i> <b>DAVID EMERY SCOTT</b> <i>(Write-in)</i> 5545 Paradise Commerce, MI 48382</p>	<p>David Scott is a retired Oakland County Deputy Sheriff, after a career of service blessed with accolades, awards, and meritorious service, I worked in Iraq as an international Police Advisor embedded with the U.S.Army to train, mentor, and monitor, and create law enforcement where only tribal law existed at times. I am a father, grandfather, married for 28 years to Margaret. In 2016 my desire to improve service to Commerce Township residents began by removing the poor practices, assure fiscal responsibility, and provide quality services to protect, and serve our township. In 2016 we had a sub standard staffing of the Fire, and Police Departments. We actually had Township employees with no drivers license, on probation for criminal convictions of drunk driving, domestic violence, drug use. The township was poorly run. We had little or no code enforcement. Since winning election in 2016 we have no less than 2 firefighters on duty per station, Police coverage, and Code enforcement removing multiple dangerous dwellings. I successfully obtained grants and donations to solve issues exceeding \$4 million instead of raising taxes. Fiscal responsibility is the key to our success.</p>	<p>1st Continued fiscal responsibility is my priority, providing service without raising taxes. We received a federal grant exceeding \$1 million to hire 8 firefighters, 5 of which came from our Paid on Call staff. We have added 5 miles of bike path using a \$2.2 Million dollar donation, we have created a wheel chair accessible barrier free playground using \$1 million donated dollars. We have closed on the \$4 million sale of the DDA downtown construction site, moving it out of the conceptual cloud to blue prints preparing to be built. I can continue to provide services, protecting green space demanding higher quality and seek solutions in partnerships not out of your pocket. Improve roads, though we don't own them we have partnered with the RCOC I've proven the volume of traffic requires their attention. That is how I have been successful in getting so many miles of roads repaved Union Lk, Bogie Lk, Carroll, Wise, Richardson, Carey Rds and we are working to realign Union Lake to Martin. Lastly Code Enforcement having had so little for years its a battle to educate and clean up, protecting our parks but adding a dog park, along with a historical society are all important issues.</p>

**COMMERCE TOWNSHIP PRIMARY (Continued)**

<b>CANDIDATES for SUPERVISOR</b>  <b>ONE 4-year term</b> <i>Vote for no more than ONE</i>	<b>Question 1 (150 Words or less):</b> <b>Provide biographical information and explain why you are running for Township office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position.</b>	<b>Question 2 (150 Words or less):</b> <b>What are the top 3 Priority Issues facing your township and what actions would you, as a township official, take regarding each of them?</b>
<i>Republican</i> <b>THOMAS KEITH ZONER</b> <i>(Write-in)</i> 2355 E. Commerce Rd. Commerce, MI 48382	<b>DID NOT RESPOND IN TIME FOR INCLUSION</b>	

**1 Candidate for TOWNSHIP CLERK for ONE 4-year term**  
**MELISSA CREECH** 9440 Newton Place Rd., Commerce, MI 48390

**1 Candidate for TOWNSHIP TREASURER for ONE 4-year term**  
**MOLLY B. PHILLIPS** 2870 Ravinewood Dr., Commerce, MI 48382

## COMMERCE TOWNSHIP PRIMARY (Continued)

### 5 Candidates for TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE for FOUR 4-year terms

<b>CANDIDATES for TRUSTEE</b>  <b>FOUR 4-year term</b> <i>Vote for no more than FOUR</i>	<b>Question 1 (150 Words or less):</b> <b>Provide biographical information and explain why you are running for Township office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position.</b>	<b>Question 2 (150 Words or less):</b> <b>What are the top 3 Priority Issues facing your township and what actions would you, as a township official, take regarding each of them?</b>
<p><i>Republican</i>  <b>BOB BERKHEISER</b>                      5150 Joe Dr.                      Commerce, MI 48382</p>	<p>I have been married to my wife Christine for 36 years. I am a father to six children, three are natural born, one adopted, and two are my nieces. I served in the United States Air Force for 20 years as a pharmacist. I now work for a major pharmaceutical company as an account executive in the Federal Market. I am active in my church, the Township Parks and Recreation Committee, and an Eagle Scout mentor for Troop 308 of the Boy Scouts. I am an Eagle Scout, my sons are Eagle Scouts. While I was the Scoutmaster, I had 25 Scouts attain the rank of Eagle. I enjoy camping, fishing, and sports.</p> <p>I have been a Trustee for 8 years and have been very fiscally minded. During my time in the military I have managed hospital budgets in excess of \$75 M. This has directly helped me when it comes to budget time with the Township.</p>	<p>As a Trustee for Commerce Township for the last eight years, we have many open items/projects on our plate. We are in the process of replacing a sorely needed fire station and developing a new Sherriff substation. We are working diligently on creating an environment for Windmill horse farm to be successful and serve the needs of the community. On top of all of those projects, we are in the middle of developing a new business district, 5 th and Main, at Martin Parkway and Pontiac Trail. All of this is important, but, to me accomplishing this in the most fiscally responsible way is of utmost importance. We have limited funds, and I want to make sure they are spent in the most prudent way. I believe the biggest challenges facing the township will be fiscal in nature. Depending on how the economy comes back, there will be a loss in state funding and local tax base. I think the current board has done a good job being fiscally responsible with tax payer dollars. I will be prepared to respond to the Downtown Development Authority's (DDA) Martin Parkway bond repayment debt while guiding the Township into the future. I will be cautious in allocating tax dollars to projects that can wait.</p>

## COMMERCE TOWNSHIP PRIMARY (Continued)

<b>CANDIDATES for TRUSTEE</b>  <b>FOUR 4-year term</b> <i>Vote for no more than FOUR</i>	<b>Question 1 (150 Words or less):</b> <b>Provide biographical information and explain why you are running for Township office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position.</b>	<b>Question 2 (150 Words or less):</b> <b>What are the top 3 Priority Issues facing your township and what actions would you, as a township official, take regarding each of them?</b>
<p><i>Republican</i>  <b>VANESSA MAGNER</b>                      4500 Commerce Woods Dr.                      Commerce, MI 48382</p>	<p>In 2007 I moved to Commerce Township with my husband. We started our family here and love raising our two children in this town. In 2003 I started working at Commerce Township as a Clerical Administrator, was promoted to Deputy Clerk in 2009, and appointed Township Clerk in 2013. These different positions within the Township have given me a whole-view perspective of how internal processes work and the history that comes along with it. I was proudly elected as a Township Trustee in 2016. Also in 2016, I shifted my career path and was hired at Community Choice Credit Union. In addition, I have also been a board member of Lakes Area Youth Assistance since 2014. My focus is to be fiscally responsible while keeping our community safe. Being a full-time working mother and wife, my goal as a Township Trustee is to represent the working families in Commerce Township.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managing our budget and being fiscally responsible. Keeping a low tax rate while providing services to keep Commerce Township a beautiful, clean, and safe community. I keep an open mind while I listen to the residents on their needs and wants as we make decisions.</li> <li>2. Public safety will continue to be a priority. It is the Township Board’s responsibility to ensure the police and fire departments have the supplies, tools, and staff needed to keep Commerce Township safe.</li> <li>3. Traffic throughout the community needs to be addressed. We must work with developers and the road commission to manage the traffic flow. As new developments are proposed, we need to consider traffic concerns as a part of the planning and decision-making process.</li> </ol>
<p><i>Republican</i>  <b>RICK SOVEL</b>                      8452 Golfside Dr.                      Commerce, MI 48382</p>	<p>My experience qualifies me to be a Trustee. I currently serve the residents of Commerce Township as a Trustee. I am also a member of the Commerce Township Zoning Board of Appeals, a past member of the Commerce Township Library Advisory Board and have served on other Township committees. I am a business owner running a successful business. I am active in the community and strive to get the most out of our tax dollars.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public safety is always a top priority. Providing excellent police service and upgrading the fire department to advance life support and emergency/rescue service. Commerce Township was recently named one of the 20 safest communities in Michigan.</li> <li>2. Expanding our parks and recreation system, pathways, bike trails, and the Air Line Trail. Connecting subdivisions to the trail system.</li> <li>3. Maintaining a low tax rate and a balanced budget while getting the most out of our tax dollars “without raising taxes” is critical.</li> </ol>

## COMMERCE TOWNSHIP PRIMARY (Continued)

<p><b>CANDIDATES for TRUSTEE</b></p> <p><b>FOUR 4-year term</b> <i>Vote for no more than FOUR</i></p>	<p><b>Question 1 (150 Words or less):</b> Provide biographical information and explain why you are running for Township office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position.</p>	<p><b>Question 2 (150 Words or less):</b> What are the top 3 Priority Issues facing your township and what actions would you, as a township official, take regarding each of them?</p>
<p><i>Republican</i> <b>JOHNNY WALKER</b> 4449 Philip Ln. Commerce, MI 48382</p>	<p>I moved to Commerce Twp. with my wife and two children after growing up in Northville, MI. I attended college at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Currently I am working at Bedrock Detroit which has allowed to have experience in commercial engineering management and in residential engineering management. I have worked there for about 10 years and absolutely love what I do. I have been part of several large projects and worked with a variety of vendors, contractors and organizations to get things done. I feel that my background can help the board navigate the projects they are working on, and enables me to offer first-hand knowledge to negotiate and get things done in a timely manner. I am well-rounded with knowledge in many different aspects of business, development, real estate and business politics, and by running for township office I feel I can provide insight and verification to the various contracts and items that are presented to the board regularly. I really believe I can make a difference in Commerce Township and offer a new perspective. With my knowledge and background, I feel like I have a lot to offer.</p>	<p>My first priority is the parks and maintaining everything that Commerce has to offer all the residents. I want to make sure the parks stay open and beautiful. One of the lesser known amenities offered in Commerce is a full riding stable, Windmill Farms, located on Wixom road. Like Windmill Farms, I feel like Commerce has so much to offer and not everyone knows about it. We need to make sure that not only our residents of Commerce Township, but those looking to move to a new area are aware and take advantage of the beauty around them. My second priority is making sure taxpayer dollars are used for the wants of the township residents. Through attending local board meetings I have found the bid process is lacking, with my experience my plan is to establish a better process with more transparency to the community. Lastly after recent vandalism at Scarlet's Playground, I would take action to increase security and safety for all public areas in Commerce Twp. I would work to allocate funding for additional security in areas where there is high amounts of community member activity.</p>

## COMMERCE TOWNSHIP PRIMARY (Continued)

<b>CANDIDATES for TRUSTEE</b>  <b>FOUR 4-year term</b> <i>Vote for no more than FOUR</i>	<b>Question 1 (150 Words or less):</b> <b>Provide biographical information and explain why you are running for Township office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position.</b>	<b>Question 2 (150 Words or less):</b> <b>What are the top 3 Priority Issues facing your township and what actions would you, as a township official, take regarding each of them?</b>
<p><i>Republican</i>  <b>GEORGE K. WEBER</b>                      877 Laguna Dr.                      Wolverine Lake, MI                      48390</p>	<p>My family and I fell in love with, and moved to Commerce Township 34 years ago. The parks, greenspace, lakes, and warm people drew us here; we can't see ourselves living anywhere else. I have been married to my wife Mickie for more than 40 years and we have one daughter who now lives in Phoenix. Mickie works at the Richardson Senior Center and I retired from Ford Motor Company after nearly 32 years, where I started at the Wixom plant and ended in Dearborn as the Director of Global Market Representation. My experience at Ford developed my focus on customer service, attention to detail, the importance of community, and my fiscal responsibility. I have a proven track record for delivering results while never losing sight of integrity and compassion. After retiring and feeling so blessed in life, I knew I had to serve the area we love so much. In addition to Trustee, I am a home care volunteer for Angela Hospice and a member of our church Hospitality Committee. For fun, I am restoring my high school 1968 Camaro (I take a lot of grief from my Ford buddies for having a Chevy in the garage!), play softball, golf, boat, explore our parks, and harass my lovely wife whenever possible.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managing Growth. Families and business want to move to Commerce Township. While this is great for property values, we must balance this growth with maintaining our "bedroom community DNA." Our parks and greenspace must be protected by addressing increasing congestion. I do not believe we need more high-density apartment buildings other than what we already have planned.</li> <li>2. Safety &amp; Continued Focus On Fiscal Responsibility. We will see a significant shortfall in state funding due to the pandemic. The Board has done an excellent job being fiscally conservative; our funding/budgets for Police, Fire/Rescue, and Water &amp; Sewer all have been prioritized and protected. We need to forecast longer term revenue effects, prioritize spending based on Township needs vs. wants, and NO NEW TAXES.</li> <li>3. Traffic Congestion - While Commerce Twp. is a destination, the growth of "pass through" traffic to surrounding areas is compounding our problem. The first priority is to resolve the Union Lake Road bottle neck. We have begun discussions with the Oakland County Road Commission to change the intersections where Martin Pkwy ends and Union Lake road begins - we must map a new road and deliver this.</li> </ol>

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