

**VOTER GUIDE – NOVEMBER ELECTION**  
***CITY of BIRMINGHAM***

**Tuesday, November 7, 2017**  
**POLLS ARE OPEN 7:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M.**

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OAKLAND AREA**

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**3 Candidates for CITY COMMISSION for THREE 4-year terms**

<p><b>CANDIDATES for City Commission</b></p> <p><b>THREE 4-year terms</b> <i>Vote for no more than THREE</i></p>	<p><b>Question 1:</b> Please provide biographical information and explain why you are running for City office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position.</p>	<p><b>Question 2:</b> What are the top 3 Priority Issues that the city should address and what actions would you take regarding each of them?</p>
<p><b>RACKELINE HOFF</b> 941 Arden Ln. Birmingham, MI 48009</p>	<p>I have been a Birmingham City Commissioner since 2001, serving as Mayor in 2005, 2010 and 2016. I am running for my fifth term on the Commission because I want to continue to be involved in the decision-making that is critical to maintaining Birmingham's financial stability, its quality services/programs and its beautiful environment. During my 16 years in office, I have demonstrated that I research issues thoroughly; that I listen to all points of view and make my decisions thoughtfully and independently; and that I am approachable and respond to citizen concerns.</p> <p>I have 25 years of experience as a mediator for the Oakland Mediation Center and in local district courts. During my 40-years as a Birmingham resident, I have been a community activist, holding numerous volunteer leadership positions on the local, county and state levels. My professional background is public relations and corporate communications.</p>	<p>Fiscal Responsibility -- Through sound management and careful oversight, Birmingham has maintained its financial stability and AAA bond rating. To ensure continuation of quality programs and services without increasing the city's tax rate, I will focus on making prudent financial decisions and continuously pursue cost-saving measures.</p> <p>Communications -- With increasing activity in both the neighborhoods and Downtown area, it is essential that our residents and business community have access to current and timely information. I will continue to support City efforts to provide such information via the City's enhanced electronic tools which can be found at <a href="http://www.bhamgov.org/communications_tools">www.bhamgov.org/communications_tools</a>.</p> <p>Infrastructure Projects -- In addition to the ongoing replacement and/or repair of Birmingham's aging infrastructure, major projects are proposed for Downtown Birmingham including the reconstruction of South Old Woodward and consideration of the expansion of the North Old Woodward parking deck. I am committed to giving thorough oversight to these projects and carefully monitoring costs.</p>

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM (Continued)**

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<p><b>MARK NICKITA</b> 752 E. Lincoln Birmingham, MI 48009</p>	<p>I am a resident of nearly 30 years, currently serving my 2nd term as Mayor, and have been a City Commissioner since 2009. Since my initial civic involvement in 1996, I have been a dedicated volunteer on numerous boards and committees, most significantly serving over 10 years on the Planning Board. Since being elected, I have worked successfully with my colleagues on the Commission to maintain and increase the exceptional services that our community enjoys while lowering our tax rate. I will continue to work with the Commission, our city manager and staff, our business community and all residents, to set priorities and resolve difficult issues related to our budget, tax revenue, services and community development challenges. As an architect and urban designer, I have unique insight into our community and am a tireless advocate for enhancing our neighborhoods and promoting our pedestrian-friendly, walkable downtown and districts. My proven leadership and hands-on experience have been an asset to the Commission when making decisions, affecting us all, our neighborhoods and businesses.</p>	<p>I will focus on continuing to manage our city's economic budget demands, specifically our increasing legacy costs. To address our growing financial commitments, I will work with the Commission, continuing to implement efficient strategies to maintain services and lower our tax rate, leading to a more effective government that meets the needs of all community members - individuals, families, seniors and businesses</p> <p>Birmingham is about to embark on many significant civic projects/initiatives, including the rebuilding of Old Woodward in downtown, the Bates Street Extension, a new parking deck, a city master plan and many pedestrian enhancements. My expertise as an architect/urban planner is unique on the Commission and will be valuable in guiding our process to achieve successful results</p> <p>I strongly advocate for a walkable city. I will continue working to enhance the pedestrianization of our neighborhoods, parks, downtown &amp; districts, further implementing our Multi-Modal Plan, which increases property values, and the health and safety of our residents, particularly children and seniors.</p>

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM (Continued)**

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<p><b>STUART LEE SHERMAN</b> 1252 Stanley Birmingham, MI 48009</p>	<p>Three times in the last twelve years you elected me to serve on the Birmingham City Commission. I have been honored to serve not only as a City Commissioner, but also as Mayor Pro Tem (twice) and as the Mayor (twice) of the City of Birmingham. I take great pride in the knowledge that we are positioning Birmingham to remain a vibrant community for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren. We are doing this by continuously improving our neighborhoods, our parks, and reinvigorating our downtown. We have made these improvements to our City without raising the operating millage tax rate during both good and bad economic times. We have made great progress and I want to continue working for you. That is why I am seeking re-election.</p>	<p>We must continue vigilantly controlling the City's spending and exercise responsible budget management. During both economic downturns and economic prosperity, we must exercise responsible management by balancing the City's budget without using reserve funds and without raising taxes. I have been a diligent gatekeeper on your behalf by personally scrutinizing every line item of every budget and every request for funds that comes before the Commission. Challenges lie ahead, many of which we don't even know yet. To address all challenges, we must listen to our residents' views and concerns. We must continue re-investing in our infrastructure to protect our property values and way of life. We must continue addressing how we provide services to our seniors and, at the same time, to our younger families; two vastly different demographics with different and sometimes competing needs.</p> <p>I have shown that I can make difficult decisions in a fair and equitable manner.</p>

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM (Continued)**

**4 Candidates for LIBRARY BOARD for THREE 4-year terms**

<p><b>CANDIDATES for Library Board</b></p> <p><b>THREE 4-year terms</b> <i>Vote for no more than THREE</i></p>	<p><b>Question 1:</b> Please provide biographical information and explain why you are running for City office and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position.</p>	<p><b>Question 2:</b> What are the top 3 Priority Issues that the city should address and what actions would you take regarding each of them?</p>
<p><b>ASHLEY AIDENBAUM</b> 327 Southfield Rd. 2CS Birmingham, MI 48009</p>	<p>Baldwin Public Library is a very important place to me as a Birmingham resident and lifetime lover of reading. Naturally, I was thrilled to be appointed to the library board in 2015. We are a very dedicated group, and work hard, in partnership with the City, to keep the library strong. It has been an honor to contribute to the team.</p> <p>For the last few years, I have been working for the Skillman Foundation (first as Special Projects Manager and now as Associate Program Officer), which focuses on improving education and increasing opportunity for kids in Detroit. In 2007, I graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in cultural anthropology and a minor in history. In addition to philanthropy, I have professional experience in business, project management, community outreach and communications.</p> <p>The role of libraries is so critical today as we face declining education quality in our state. I hope I can continue to serve and ensure that BPL - a key feature of Birmingham's civic center – remains a steadfast place of learning and community for all ages.</p>	<p>I will speak to this in terms of the strong partnership between the library and the City, and how I hope we can go forward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Keep improving our library in ways that are responsive to the community and broader trends in libraries. Birmingham has many strengths, but remaining competitive requires ongoing strategic effort.</li> <li>2) Continue to focus on resident needs and wants. We must use all the tools available to us to make sure our decisions as board members are informed by quality input from the public.</li> <li>3) Maintain fiscal responsibility. This means using our resources wisely to deliver maximum value to residents.</li> </ol>
<p><b>MIKE KROLL</b> 1941 Washington Blvd. Birmingham, MI 48009</p>	<p>See me on Facebook</p>	

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM (Continued)**

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<p><b>MELISSA S. MARK</b> 635 Puritan Ave. Birmingham, MI 48009</p>	<p>I moved to Birmingham in 1983 and have lived here continually except for 9 years as a resident of Beverly Hills in the 1990's. I served on the Friends of Baldwin Public Library board for many years. I graduated from Fairfield University with a business degree in 1980 and an MS degree from Wayne State University in Library &amp; Information Sciences in 2005. I was an Adult Services substitute librarian at The Baldwin Public Library briefly when I became Executive Director of the Swedish American Chamber of Commerce. As the Director I was able to double the membership and put the Chamber on a much stronger financial foundation.</p> <p>I am running for the Library Board position because of my passion for "lifetime learning". I am an avid reader, and I love to explore all kinds of subject matter. I believe in the importance of libraries, and I believe that libraries are community builders. I want to continue to make Baldwin even more relevant to all Birmingham and contract communities' residents by exploring ideas to connect "non-Library" resident users to Baldwin.</p>	<p>From the perspective of Baldwin Public Library, I believe fiscal responsibility, customer service, and "connectivity" are three top issues.</p> <p>Seeing how wonderful the renovated Birkerts addition is now, with better infrastructure, design and light is so exciting. It is even more commendable since it was accomplished on time AND below budget under the auspices of our Library Director, the Library Board and staff. I expect that if the renovation of the children's room is approved, similar results of the project will be realized.</p> <p>Customer/patron service is my strongest priority. I was trained in customer service excellence in my first job at Xerox Corporation. I believe great service creates better relations and ensures community support. I would urge continual staff customer service training in order to accomplish this.</p> <p>By "connectivity" I mean increasing all kinds of connections to schools, business entities, associations, the senior community, etc. This connectivity would come in the form of library materials, programs, speakers, etc. as it relates to our residents' needs.</p>

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM (Continued)**

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<p><b>FRANK PISANO</b> 612 Davis Ave. Birmingham, MI 48009</p>	<p>Resident in Birmingham for 22 years. Completed two terms as Baldwin Public Library Trustee</p> <p>I'm running for my third term as a Baldwin Public Library Trustee because I want to continue to serve in the community that I live. Over the last 8 years I have been on the Library Board we have been able to accomplish a lot of positive things at the library and I want to continue serving to accomplish goals we have in place for future enhancements to the library. I have been on the Finance &amp; Building Committees the last 8 years and we have been able to be fiscally discipline with the Library budget and accomplished the New Adult Service Renovation that came in on time and under budget. I've also been able to work on the Books &amp; Bites committee since inception. We have raised money for the Library to enhance areas in the library and enhance programs that weren't part of the Library budget. I'm really passionate about the Baldwin Public Library and I want to continue to be apart of the great things that the library provides for our community.</p>	<p>Fiscally responsible with Tax payers money. I will continue to make sure we stay on budget and look for ways to enhance the library without raising taxes.</p> <p>Enhance the Library. I want to continue to enhance our library and have services that support our patrons. We want the space to be flexible, collaborative, and able to change with how people will use the library in the future.</p> <p>Community Relations. Continue to listen to our residents and patrons on what they would like to see implemented at Baldwin. I will also continue to visit our contract communities and to make sure they are satisfied with the services that we provide to their communities.</p>

**THERE ARE NO CITY PROPOSALS ON THE BALLOT.**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan national organization whose purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party. Candidate responses are included as submitted and have not been edited except in cases where the replies have exceeded the stated word limitations. **Spelling and Grammar were not corrected.** The inclusion of candidates' statements and opinions is solely in the interest of public service and in no way is to be construed as an endorsement by the League of Women Voters which takes no responsibility for any views or facts stated by the candidates.