

League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area Questionnaire for  
Kalamazoo City Commission Candidates

Name: Bobby Hopewell

Age: 45

Address: 525 Stuart Ave

Biographical Information

Present Occupation: Borgess Medical Center, Director of Hospitality  
Services Education: BS, in Public Service Administration/EMS  
Administration

Background & Experience: Kalamazoo City Commission, 2003 – present;  
Mayor, 2007 – present, Vice Mayor, 2005 – 2007. Planning Commission  
(6 years), two as Chairperson; Zoning Board of Appeals (4yrs);  
Chairperson for the Charter Review Committee; Current Board Member of  
Douglass Community Association, Kalamazoo Communities and Schools,  
Pretty Lake Vacation Camp, Eastside Community and Youth Center and  
Downtown Development Authority.

Website: [www.bobbyhopewell.com](http://www.bobbyhopewell.com)

1. What strategies do you advocate to promote the economic vitality of the city? How do those strategies relate to the vitality of the region?

First, economic vitality starts with our current businesses. We need to continue to build a city environment that has good roads, great neighborhoods, great schools, good public transportation and other services, and a thriving downtown. Second, we should continue to work with our current partners (Southwest Michigan First and our higher education institutions, to name a few) to develop next generation jobs for our community. Third, we need to do a better job at coordinating community assets to help our children and the Kalamazoo Promise succeed.

2. What are the city's strongest assets? How would you use those assets to address the city's most pressing issues?

The Kalamazoo Promise is the most wonderful asset ever bestowed on any community. Yet, it is only one of many valuable assets in the City, which include WMU, Kalamazoo College, KVCC, our K-12 schools, neighborhoods, popular downtown festivals, the KIA, the Civic, and the Symphony. Truly, our greatest asset is the people of Kalamazoo. We have a long history of citizen involvement in addressing community needs. This is what

inspired me to create the Kalamazoo Action Covenant, a developing initiative to strengthen and better coordinate community involvement.

3. What are the primary skills or talents you would bring to the office? Give an example of how you've used one or more of them and describe why are they especially important at this time in the history of the city.

My greatest skills include: 1) the ability to bring citizens and commissioners together and involve people to tackle the challenges at hand; 2) being thoroughly involved in the community; and 3) the ability to work with our outstanding city staff to get the job done. Examples of how I have used these skills include the team efforts to bring jobs to our community over the last several years, and more recent initiatives to work closely with several individuals and organizations to coordinate actions to help our youth succeed.

4. Do you support or oppose the city ballot proposals? Explain why.

A. Non-discrimination ordinance. I support this ordinance. Everyone should be free from all aspects of discrimination. Voters will decide on amending existing city ordinances (Chapter 18) to also prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Please vote yes!

B. Transit millage. I support this millage. Public transportation is critical in our community. If approved, voters will pay 1.0 mills for combined city and county millages to support public transportation, equaling prior levels, while still less than the 1.38 mills we paid in 2007. Please vote Yes!