

Voters Guide 2022

Isanti County Commissioner DISTRICT 5

Kristi LaRowe

What are your qualifications for the job? “I am a long-time resident of Isanti County who have made it my home for the past 36 years. In 2021 my family and I were named the Farm Family of the Year. We farm 3,000



Kristi LaRowe

acres. I have enjoyed volunteering in our church and my children’s schools, and I believe volunteering is huge. My goal is to give back to my community.”

What do you propose to aid the development of businesses in this area?

“One industry that we overlook is farming. We have trouble keeping our land because we cannot manage our own ditches. That’s one thing we can do for our farmers – they are our livelihood. They are the ones that feed us.”

Is the levy too high? If so, how do you propose to lower it? “Mike [Betker], the Isanti City Finance Director, talked to me about a basic capital plan and a capital improvement plan. His plan is to [have Isanti] debt-free in 25 years, and he has planned out 50 years. I think we need to talk to people like that and get more informed.”

Susan Morris

What are your qualifications for the job? “I graduated from Cambridge in 1982, and I have a business management degree. I also ran my own catering business for 25 years, and that’s where I learned a lot of the things



Susan Morris

that drive me as a commissioner, including efficiency and customer service. I love serving as a commissioner, which I have done for four years. I also am a founder of Isanti County Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, an organization which supports veterans and their families.”

What do you propose to aid the development of businesses in this area?

“We formed an Economic Development Authority because we don’t want to miss opportunities [to bring businesses to our county]. You have to have a big-picture look. We have an opportunity to bring data centers here, so we’re working with the EDA to set those kinds of things up.”

Is the levy too high? If so, how do you propose to lower it? “If you go to the County Comparison website, you will see that Isanti County has the 19th-lowest county tax in the state of Minnesota. Everybody on the board is fiscal conservative, so we’re always searching to see if we can do things better-faster-cheaper. We cut from 17 departments down to five, that was a huge efficiency for the county that saved \$750,000 to do that.”

Chisago County to hold election accuracy test

Notice is hereby given that a public accuracy test of vote counting and ballot marking equipment to be used in the Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2022 General Election in Chisago County will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 25.

The testing will take place in Room 150B

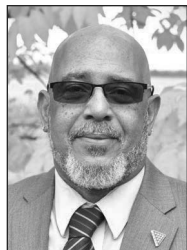
of the Chisago County Government building, which is located at 313 North Main Street in Center City, starting at 9 a.m.

Anyone who would like to witness the demonstration is welcome to do so at the above-mentioned location and time.

Braham City Council (Vote for 2)

Peter Duvernay

What experiences do you have that would be beneficial to this role? “I coach youth football, I coach youth basketball. I was a professional at



Peter Duvernay

Braham for two years. I left Braham to move onto management skills. ... I’ve opened a restaurant, I’ve managed the restaurant. I created a budget for a restaurant. I kept the restaurant within its budget.”

What do you see as opportunities and challenges currently facing the city? “Opportunities and revenue. We have a lot of empty buildings out here that can be used for a barber shop. ... All these empty buildings that we have, we should be able to contact these owners with these buildings. Do they want to work with the city council, the mayor, to find out if we can do something with them? ... And the biggest thing is, the residents opinion. Ask them what they would like to see come to Braham.”

What community issue matters most to you? “The main thing I’m concerned about is the safety of Braham. These taxes are high, they’re crazy but yet, they’re talking about trimming the police department, the fire department and public works. You all have to understand, the police departments response time right now is two to three minutes right? If we cut down, response time is going to go up to 10 to 15 minutes because we’re getting help from the county.”

Robert Knowles

What experiences do you have that would be beneficial to this role? “I spent 30 years working for the city of Braham as a police officer and then as the police



Robert Knowles

chief for the last 20 years. And part of my experience was spending my 20 years as chief, a lot of time in the city councils listening to the city councils and being there as officers are supposed to be but listening to what is going on and giving my opinion or information as I was asked. ... I’ve been on city council for going on almost four years and so I still have kind of an insight to what’s going on in the community.”

What do you see as opportunities and challenges currently facing the city?

“The opportunities are to continue to look for grants and to work with the state as we’ve been trying to get money to help us out with our infrastructure. ... I’ll be very honest, we were not probably as diligent in keeping an eye on what a past administrator was spending on and did not know this person was using a lot of the money. ... The challenge is trying to have a budget and to keep within that but we are going to raise taxes.”

What community issue matters most to you?

“I agree with a lot of talking points that each of the candidates have brought up. The problem is we still have to find a way to pay for it. ... We have a good police department that’s being run adequately. I agree with people when I say I don’t want to see that cut. But by the same token whoever gets elected is going to have to deal with these issues.”

Nicole Peltz

What experiences do you have that would be beneficial to this role? “I’ve lived in the heart of Bra-



Nicole Peltz

ham now for coming up on 13 years. For two of those years, I’ve owned and operated Cole Salon right here in the heart of Braham. Every month I talk to approximately one hundred plus people. Many of whom are from our area and so I feel I have a very good pulse on the people of our area and what they’d like to see accomplished in our town. Aside from that for nearly 20 years, I volunteered in a non-profit organization focusing on helping communities, not just of Isanti County but statewide and even nationwide.”

What do you see as opportunities and challenges currently facing the city?

“I think most people in this room are very much aware of the budget crisis that we’re in and honestly, I personally need a lot more time than this to respond to that type of question because it is multifaceted. ... But I’d love to talk about our opportunities, and our opportunities are huge. Again I understand that there are layers to this and steps that need to be taken, but that’s where we need leadership that’s ready to take those steps.”

What community issue matters most to you?

“I’m with Pete 100% that those are the last two departments that I would ever recommend cutting from a budget. I understand that the huge tax increase is a concern for our residents. Unfortunately, because of our past leadership, we are put in a position where it’s inevitable.”

Michael Wachs

What experiences do you have that would be beneficial to this role? “My and I own the Sub-



Michael Wachs

way in town so we kind of are invested in the town. I’m also on Braham Fire Department, I like to give back to the community. I am also a supervisor operation manager for an underground utility company and obviously a small business owner in town. I have knowledge of big city infrastructure and also having knowledge of running a small business.”

What do you see as opportunities and challenges currently facing the city?

“Budget is huge. I’ve seen firsthand just working with the fire department, how budgets have affected the city. ... We need to work on the budget as a city. I understand the struggles that the current city council is going through.”

What community issue matters most to you? “My main concern is growth and development of the city, but maintaining the small-town feel. We have a lot of younger generations moving to Braham. Myself, a lot of the guys on the fire department, they want to see the city grow just as much as I do but one of the big things that I enjoy about Braham. ... is having that small-town feel.”

Vicky Ethen is a candidate for Braham City Council. She did not attend the Braham Candidate Forum.

Jeremy Kunshier is running unopposed in a special election for a seat on the Braham City Council.