

ELECTION GUIDE

2026 PRIMARY

JULY 30, 2026

CountyStar.com

ISANTI-CHISAGO COUNTY STAR 7

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

From the editor:

The *Isanti-Chisago County Star* understands how important election guides are to voters in helping them make an educated decision on who they want to represent them.

For the 2026 Primary, in-person voting will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 11.

The Star sent out brief questionnaires to candidates, with nine responding. Their responses are printed on this page and pages 8 and 9.



AARON BERG

City of residence:
Cambridge

Why are you running for election for Cambridge city council?

I am running for re-election because I care about Cambridge and want to continue serving our community with integrity, preparation, and accountability. Serving on the Cambridge City Council has strengthened my belief that decisions are made through preparation, listening to residents, and understanding the long-term impact of every decision. My experience serving on the Cambridge City Planning Commission, the Cambridge-Isanti School Board, the Cambridge City Council, and in local government administration has shaped my approach to public service and reinforced the importance of well-informed leadership. I believe residents deserve elected officials who are prepared, accessible, transparent, and committed to serving the community's long-term interests. I will continue working to ensure Cambridge remains a safe, financially responsible, and welcoming community while protecting the quality of life residents value.

Besides taxes, If you were only allowed to focus on one topic during your term as mayor, what would that topic be and why?

My primary focus will continue to be responsible long-term planning. The decisions we make today about growth, infrastructure, housing, public safety, parks, and economic development will shape Cambridge for decades. Responsible planning means looking beyond today's decisions and understanding how they will affect Cambridge for years to come. By planning ahead, we can make wise investments, support local businesses, ensure city services keep pace with growth, and preserve the quality of life that makes Cambridge a great place to call home.

What process will you take for deciding how to vote on agenda topics, especially ones that are of greater public interest?

Every decision begins with preparation. I review agenda materials thoroughly, ask questions when needed, listen to residents, city staff, and subject matter experts, and consider the legal, financial, and long-term impacts of each proposal. Before reaching a decision, I consider the staff recommendation and the perspectives of residents who will be affected. I approach every issue with an open mind and evaluate it on its own merits. I believe every resident deserves to know that decisions are made thoughtfully, transparently, and with the community's long-term interests in mind.

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BOB SHOGREN

City of residence:
Cambridge

Why are you running for election for Cambridge city council?

I am blessed to be able to live in a nice community, and I'd like all city residents to share the same feeling. The current city council works very well together to promote growth and provide economic development opportunities, and I want to keep the positive momentum going in Cambridge. My service on the city council is a great way to give back to the community, and it's a privilege to serve.

Besides taxes, If you were only allowed to focus on one topic during your term as mayor, what would that topic be



TOM SCHIBILLA

City of residence:
Cambridge

Why are you running for election for Cambridge city council?

My name is Tom Schibilla and I am running for Cambridge City Council. I have lived in Isanti County for most of my life and in Cambridge for over 20 years. I raised my family here and am proud to be from Cambridge. I am currently serving on both the Isanti County and City of Cambridge Parks and Recreation Boards.

As your neighbor and active member of the community, I am committed to ensuring that every voice is heard. I believe Council members should listen more and talk less. I believe citizens should be allowed to speak at all meetings, whether an item is on the agenda or not. The Council should actively serve the people and encourage conversation.

Besides taxes, If you were only allowed to focus on one topic during your term as mayor, what would that topic be

CHISAGO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



CHRIS DUBOSE

Residence:
Chisago County

Why are you running for election for Chisago County Commissioners?

I became involved in the community right after I moved here in 1996. I volunteered for Planning Commission and loved it. I like being active, I like to think I have a lot to offer, and I've accomplished a lot over the last 30 years. I have been County Commissioner, Mayor, City Council, City and County Planning Commissions, Economic Development(s) Park Boards, Budget, Sewer, Bike Trail, and was even the LAPD Police Commissioner when we merged departments. Im also active in Rotary, Good Neighbors, and Foundation. I love volunteering and helping the community.

Besides taxes, If you were only allowed to focus on one topic during your term as mayor, what would that topic be and why?

Controlling taxes is my #1 priority but related to

and why?

Economic development keeps taxes lower for everyone and helps to fund important items like public works, public safety, and other government services. It also brings new businesses and opportunities to Cambridge, including jobs.

What process will you take for deciding how to vote on agenda topics, especially ones that are of greater public interest?

The first thing I do is ask how my vote will affect those who live within the city limits of Cambridge; after all, those are the people I represent. My vote must always be whatever results in the best value for those living in the city. I welcome and consider input from city residents, and I put little stock in outside interference. Ultimately, every vote comes down to the same question I have asked throughout my years on the council: "Is this in the best interests of the citizens of Cambridge?" If the answer is yes, that is how I will vote.

and why?

I will prioritize keeping the City of Cambridge accountable for all decisions. I am willing to put in the time to make informed decisions on all issues. I have been reading all the City Council packets, which tend to be about 200 pages. I not only read them, I submit requests for additional information when I have questions. I spent hours learning about TIF districts prior to the recent meeting. Are people aware there are already 8 housing TIF districts in Cambridge, with some expiring as late as the year 2050? Do people know the new planned 180 unit apartment buildings will pay only 40-80% as much in property taxes than a non-low income apartment complex would? Again, I will do the research.

What process will you take for deciding how to vote on agenda topics, especially ones that are of greater public interest?

I have attended all meetings for more than 2 1/2 years, so I'm aware of the current issues. I will ensure that information is easy for the layperson to understand. I will talk to as many constituents as possible and encourage people to attend meetings. I will listen to all concerns and opinions on issues and vote accordingly.

City of Appleton
Public Works Supervisor
Hourly rate: \$35-40 • Application Deadline: July 21

Job Application and Description:
appletonma.gov/employment

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ISANTI COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



STEPHANIE ARONSON

City of residence:
Isanti

Why are you running for election for Isanti County Commissioners?

I am running because Isanti County needs leadership that is open, accountable and willing to challenge the status quo. Many residents feel a growing disconnect between the public and the people making decisions on local boards and commissions. When the same familiar voices dominate those spaces, it becomes harder for new ideas to be heard and for citizens to trust that decisions are being made transparently.

I want to bring fresh perspective, encourage difficult conversations and work to restore trust and confidence in District 5 through accountability.

Besides taxes, If you were only allowed to focus on one topic during your term as mayor, what would that topic be and why?

My focus is to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of county decision-making. Residents deserve a county board that addresses issues promptly, sets clear priorities and follows through before problems grow larger or become harder to solve. Too often, local government becomes

slow, fixated on upfront cost rather than long-term value, and hesitant to make necessary decisions. Delays can leave residents frustrated, create uncertainty for families and businesses, and make it harder for the county to respond to growth, infrastructure needs, public safety concerns and other practical responsibilities. I would work to reduce the footprint of local government and improve the efficiency of county decision-making.

What process will you take for deciding how to vote on agenda topics, especially ones that are of greater public interest?

My decision-making process always begins with clearly defining the scope and nature of the issue. From there, I'd gather information, consult with knowledgeable professionals and consider the experiences of people directly affected by the decision. For issues of greater public interest, I believe it is especially important to review the facts, evaluate alternatives and consider both immediate and long-term consequences.

I believe in using a practical, adaptable approach of What-If analysis and careful consideration of how a decision may affect residents, county services, property rights, local businesses, public safety and future growth. My goal is to make decisions that are well-informed, lawful and grounded in reason and transparency.



JOSEPH FISCHER

City of residence:
Cambridge

Why are you running for election for Isanti County Commissioners?

I'm running on zoning reform and stabilizing the budget. Too many unforeseen expenses have piled up, and the county's emergency fund is gone it was used to keep taxes low with no long-term plan. We didn't save enough, and now we're facing a massive shortfall. I'm already talking with state representatives about ways they can help the county with some of the federal spending cuts that have left counties holding the bag. I also want to open county government to internships that give our youth college credit and hands-on experience.

Besides taxes, If you were only allowed to focus on one topic during your term as mayor, what would that topic be and why?

My main goal is zoning reform. Tiny houses and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are becoming a real solution for people who can't afford traditional property, and for aging residents who want to stay close to family. To make that work, we need to move away from paper applications that get lost or delayed, and support newer building technologies and methods. We should also allow alternative sewer systems, like waterless toilets and holding tanks, while ensuring proper oversight so waste management stays safe for years afterward. I'd like to see inspectors out in the field more often to help residents navigate building code, and a real escalation process for zoning disputes, so problems don't end up in court.

What process will you take for deciding how to vote on agenda topics, especially ones that are of greater public interest?

I also want to restore the county board meeting livestream. Residents can't weigh in on an issue they don't know the details of. I'll make myself available to walk through the pros and cons of anything people want to discuss, and I'll always explain my reasoning and lay out the options clearly. Board meetings and livestream Q&A sessions should happen weekly, not occasionally. I'm an independent and will always work with everyone. We are neighbors, not oppo-



KRISTI LAROWE

City of residence:
Isanti

Why are you running for election for Isanti County Commissioners?

- Approved ECE Fiber Optic expansion to better serve the residents in my District and add choices

- Abolished the Orange Frog Program
- Gave you back the right to vote for County Auditor/Treasurer
- County budget maintained and found efficiencies, resulting in only a 1.33% annual adjustment (three yr avg), which is the lowest levy rate in Minnesota Counties for the past three years

I serve on:

- Lakes and Pines Board of Directors

- Lakes and Pines Fundraising Committee member
- Central MN Council on Aging
- Library Board
- HHS Board

Besides taxes, If you were only allowed to focus on one topic during your term as mayor, what would that topic be and why?

Taking great pride in respecting our tax dollars, and promoting conservative spending.

As a County Commissioner, we work on the budget each year. We have been able to show budgetary restraints, and shift reserves to our County needs more efficiently. We categorize the greatest needs of each department. With the Department Heads and the Board working together, there has been a huge success!

What process will you take for deciding how to vote on agenda topics, especially ones that are of greater public interest?

With Lakes and Pines on the forefront of the

community, they have an understanding of the importance of building a reserve and alsoinvolving the community. Their first Gala was a success with different businesses and community involvement making it an enjoyable eveningand good fundraiser. Being on the Fundraising Board helped me to become more engaged and understanding of the needs of the community.

The Library Board also has started to look into ways the Community can fundraise. What a great opportunity for residents and businesses to participate! The Library Director is open to have community involvement and supports the efforts in fundraising. Please contact Carla Lydon, Executive Director, at: www.ecrlib.org or call the Cambridge Library.

I welcome input from residents as we pursue practical solutions that affect families, workers, and local businesses.

Join me in building a stronger Isanti County...this campaign is about building a better future together!

RONDA

SZLAVICH

FOR CITY COUNCIL

VOTE

Aug 11

PRIMARY



Isanti County Public Library, 1000 1st St NE, Isanti, MN 55120
2025 Ballot Box, Cambridge, MN 55905
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ISANTI-CHISAGO

COUNTY STAR



MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

ISANTI COUNTY MAYOR



JOSHUA AUGUSTINE LEHN

City of residence:
Isanti

Why are you running for election for Isanti Mayor?
I am running for Mayor because Isanti is my home, and I believe leadership begins with service. As a firefighter, technology professional, entrepreneur, nonprofit leader, and community volunteer, I have learned how to listen, solve problems, and bring people together. I want to help Isanti remain safe, welcoming, and financially strong while planning responsibly for growth. A strong community is not built because everyone agrees; it is built because neighbors choose to care for one another and work together toward a shared future. My goal is an accessible city government that respects every resident, stewards public resources, and preserves Isanti's close-knit character for future generations.

Besides taxes, If you were only allowed to focus on one topic during your term as mayor, what would that topic be and why?
My focus would be community engagement and cooperation. Our greatest resource is the knowledge, experience, and willingness to serve found among residents, businesses, schools, nonprofits, faith communities, and civic organizations. When people are heard early and invited to shape solutions, government makes better decisions and earns greater trust. Strong relationships also allow us to address public safety, infrastructure, economic development, and growth more effectively. A connected community is safer, more resilient, and better prepared for the future. Government cannot solve every challenge alone; lasting progress comes from shared ownership, partnerships, and neighbors serving alongside one another.

What process will you take for deciding how to vote on agenda topics, especially ones that are of greater public interest?
I will begin by listening. I will review agenda materials, ask questions, gather facts, and consider financial, legal, and long-term consequences. For matters of significant public interest, I will seek input from residents, businesses, city staff, and community organizations before reaching a conclusion. I will evaluate whether each proposal is lawful, practical, fiscally responsible, transparent, and in Isanti's overall best interest. I will explain my reasoning publicly, treat disagreement respectfully, disclose conflicts, and reconsider when credible new information emerges. Whenever possible, public input should occur early enough to influence a decision—not after the outcome has effectively been determined.



JEFF JOHNSON

City of residence:
Isanti

Why are you running for election for Isanti Mayor?
I am running for election because I want to make a positive difference in our community. I believe in listening to people's concerns, working collaboratively to solve problems, and making thoughtful decisions that serve everyone's best interests. My goal is to bring integrity, accountability, and a practical approach to leadership while helping create opportunities and improvements that benefit our community now and in the future.

Besides taxes, If you were only allowed to focus on one topic during your term as mayor, what would that topic be and why?
If I were limited to focusing on just one issue during my term, it would be economic growth and job creation. A strong local economy benefits everyone by attracting new businesses, supporting existing employers, and creating quality job opportunities for residents. When businesses thrive, our community becomes more resilient, families have greater opportunities, and we build a stronger foundation for the future. By working to encourage responsible development, support local businesses, and invest in workforce opportunities, we can strengthen our community while improving the quality of life for everyone.

What process will you take for deciding how to vote on agenda topics, especially ones that are of greater public interest?
When deciding how to vote on agenda items, especially those of significant public interest, I will take a thoughtful and transparent approach. First, I will review all available information, including staff recommendations, financial impacts, legal considerations, and community feedback. I will listen to residents, local businesses, and other stakeholders to understand how each issue affects our community in both short-term and long-term.

I believe every decision should be guided by what is in the best long-term interest of our community, not by politics or outside pressure. I will ask thoughtful questions, consider different perspectives, and evaluate both the short-term and long-term impacts before making decisions. My commitment is to be fair, informed, and accountable while ensuring residents understand the reasoning behind my votes.



Annie
The Musical

Theater Trip! Friday, October 30

CHANHASSEN DINNER THEATRE

\$130 per person - Bus pick up at North Branch and Mora

SEVP BY SEPTEMBER 28
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Heidi.Bouley@Neighborhood.BANK
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Thursday, August 6
1:30-2:30 PM

Welia Health-Mora | Conference Room 2
301 Highway 65 South | Mora, MN 55051



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