

VOTERS' GUIDE 2026

MINNESOTA SENATE DISTRICT 32 (ELECT 1)

Chris Ford (DFL)

City Residence: Blaine
Occupation: High school paraprofessional educator
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Blaine City Council Member
- Union President of my local International Association of Fire Fighters
- Fire Captain for 13 years in Rochester, Minnesota.



community and don't listen to the issues that matter. I know that I can be a fierce and passionate advocate for our community — a leader who is dedicated to the community I serve. I want to promote common-sense legislation that is focused on bringing down costs, increasing public safety and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?

A. Minnesota prospers when we invest in the basics: fully funding K-12 schools so every district can compete, expanding housing supply so working families can afford to stay here, and protecting clean water and infrastructure for the next generation. We need to lower costs — child care, healthcare, housing, groceries — while keeping taxes competitive for small businesses and workers alike. That means responsible budgeting, strong labor protections and public safety funding that supports communities and first responders. Growth isn't one big fix; it's steady, disciplined investment in people, paired with a government that works efficiently and honestly for every Minnesotan.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?

A. Cost of living and public safety staffing. Rising healthcare and childcare costs are squeezing families, and school districts are stretched thin — I'd fight for the state to fully fund our schools in a stable and ongoing way so districts don't have to turn to property tax levies that make it harder for families to get by, and for seniors to stay in their homes. Additionally, I'd work to lower health insurance costs through smarter state purchasing and insurance reform. On public safety, as a former firefighter/paramedic and union president, I've experienced the recruitment and retention crisis facing fire, EMS and police departments. I'd back state funding tied to competitive wages and mental health support, so communities aren't left waiting longer for help.

Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?

A. I want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature because my community deserves a leader who is dedicated to serving the working people who are just barely getting by. Life has become too unaffordable for so many Minnesotans. Healthcare costs are climbing, gas prices are out of control and young people can't afford to buy homes anymore. I know that I am feeling this squeeze too. Politicians have become disconnected from our

Michael Kreun (R)

City of residence: I have lived in Blaine for the last 24 years with my wife, Laura, where we have raised our three children
Occupation: Lawyer
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Minnesota State Senator, District 32 (2023-present)
- Spring Lake Park (ISD 16) School Board Member (2018-2022)
- Coon Creek Watershed Board of Managers (2017-2022)



I am continuing to lead efforts to reduce car tab fees and property taxes, eliminate the tax on Social Security, strengthen public safety and support excellent schools. I believe public service requires professionalism, civility, collaboration, and a relentless focus on solving problems and delivering for the people we represent.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?

A. Over the next five years, Minnesota can prosper by becoming a state where families can afford to live, businesses can grow and people have confidence in their government. We must respect taxpayers by exercising fiscal discipline, living within our means and lowering the burdens crushing the middle class. That means controlling spending, reducing income and sales taxes; property taxes and car tab fees; and focusing on core responsibilities like maintaining infrastructure, keeping communities safe and expecting excellence in our schools. We must be competitive by reducing regulations; speeding up permitting; and creating an environment where businesses can invest, expand and create good-paying jobs. We should make it easier to start a business and create opportunities for our children and grandchildren to build their futures here. Finally, we must restore trust by combating fraud, auditing programs that exceed their budgets and ensuring taxpayer dollars reach those who truly need them.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?

A. Minnesota's two biggest challenges are pervasive fraud in social services programs and the high cost of government. First, we must restore accountability and integrity to programs designed to help those in need. I was a leading author of legislation establishing an independent Office of Inspector General to combat fraud, ensuring it has the independence and law enforcement capabilities necessary to be effective. I also authored legislation requiring audits and legislative accountability when programs exceed their budgets, helping prevent unchecked growth and identify potential fraud. Second, the high cost of government is making life less affordable for Minnesotans. Government must exercise fiscal discipline, prioritize essential services over wants and respect taxpayers. I will continue fighting to lower car tab fees, cap property tax growth, and eliminate the tax on Social Security benefits — while ensuring government lives within its means.

Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?

A. Minnesotans expect their government to protect taxpayer dollars, prevent fraud and make life more affordable. That is not happening in Minnesota. I am running for reelection to address these challenges and deliver results. During my first term, I established a strong record of accomplishment and demonstrated a commitment to collaboration and bipartisanship. I am leading the effort in the Minnesota legislature to fight fraud. I authored legislation creating an independent Office of Inspector General to combat fraud, and I authored legislation protecting children from the harmful and addictive features of social media — legislation that passed the Senate unanimously and became law.

MINNESOTA SENATE DISTRICT 36 (ELECT 1)

Heather Gustafson (DFL)

City of residence: Vadnais Heights
Occupation: Minnesota State Senator, District 36
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Chair, Legislative Inspector General Advisory Commission
- Vice Chair, Senate Education Finance Committee
- Vice Chair, Senate State and Local Government Committee



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?

A. I spent many years as a high school teacher, and as the mother of four daughters, I saw the same pressures in my classroom as I did at my kitchen table. I see what happens when families fall behind on rent, when a school budget gets stretched too thin, or when a kid shows up hungry because breakfast wasn't an option at home. Those aren't abstract policy problems to me. I ran for office because I wanted to bring that problem-solving mindset to the legislature: listen first, find the people willing to work across the aisle, and get something done instead of just talking about it. That's how I passed the school meals program and created Minnesota's first independent watchdog for government fraud, with Republican co-authors. I want to keep doing that work so families can thrive, not just survive.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?

A. Minnesota prospers when people trust that resources are being used honestly and families can actually get ahead, not just get by. That starts with practical, bipartisan solutions to tackle the cost of living directly, from housing to child care to health care, so working families in our district aren't doing the math every time they're at the grocery store. Most people in our district, no matter their party, just want a legislature that solves problems instead of fighting culture wars. That's why I authored bipartisan legislation creating a Minnesota Entrepreneurship Task Force, to bring entrepreneurs,

workers, and educators together to strengthen what's working in our business climate and fix what isn't. I've built my record on working with Republicans and Democrats for exactly that kind of work, because the next four years shouldn't be about scoring points. They should be about proving state government can still deliver for people.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?

A. First, I've made government accountability a priority. I authored the legislation creating Minnesota's Office of Inspector General, an independent watchdog with authority to investigate fraud across state agencies, which passed with bipartisan support. I now chair the Legislative Inspector General Advisory Commission, and I'll keep pushing to give that office everything it needs to catch bad actors before they drain public resources. Second, the cost of living has families in our district stretched thin. I've focused on meaningful relief: school meals, which save families real money every month, and consumer protections like click-to-cancel laws that stop companies from quietly draining people's wallets with recurring subscriptions. Going forward, I'll pursue an affordability agenda rooted in what families actually deal with day to day: groceries, child care, health care costs, and holding corporations accountable when they take advantage of people, so families here can actually get ahead.

Quick Links:

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MINNESOTA SENATE DISTRICT 36 (ELECT 1)

Heidi Heino (R)

City of residence: Centerville

Occupation: Associate director of partnership development and small-business owner

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Member, Minnesota Task Force on Priority Admissions to State-Operated Treatment Programs
- President, Fellowship of Extraordinary Women, Twin Cities Chapter
- Volunteer, Eagle Brook Church One-on-One Care Team for eight years



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I have spent my career in the private sector, negotiating contracts and solving complex problems for my company and our clients. That experience shapes how I look at government. When I see a problem, I want to understand what is causing it and find a practical way to fix it.
Like many others, I have no pension. I have to plan, save, and take responsibility for my family’s future. Every additional dollar taken in taxes is money a family cannot use

for its needs today or save for tomorrow.
I am running because Minnesota government needs more people with private-sector experience who will ask hard questions, follow the money, and challenge the way things have always been done. Too often, government measures success by how much it spends instead of whether it solved the problem. I want to help restore accountability and make Minnesota a place where families can thrive.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. Minnesota can prosper by making it easier for families and businesses to stay and grow here. First, state government must slow spending growth and review programs for results before increasing their budgets. Savings should be used to reduce taxes and avoid shifting state costs onto local property taxpayers.
Second, Minnesota should shorten permitting timelines, eliminate duplicative regulations, and give small businesses one place to navigate state requirements. The state should streamline permitting without dictating local housing decisions. Cities should have a say in how their communities grow.
Third, we must protect the foundations employers and families rely on: safe communities, dependable roads, access to health care, and schools that teach reading, writing, math, and critical thinking. Minnesota has talented people, strong

communities, and innovative businesses. The next five years should focus on removing barriers, protecting taxpayer dollars, and making it possible for people to build their future here.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. The first challenge is fraud and the loss of public trust. Billions of taxpayer dollars have been placed at risk because state programs lacked adequate oversight. Once fraud is discovered, the money is often already gone. I would support stronger front-end verification, tiered oversight based on risk, better coordination among agencies, and meaningful consequences for those who misuse public funds. Fraud prevention must begin before the first payment is issued.
The second challenge is affordability. Families are being squeezed by property taxes, energy costs, housing expenses, and the rising cost of everyday necessities. If elected, I would work to restrain government spending, oppose unfunded mandates that increase local property taxes, reduce barriers to housing development, and lower the tax and regulatory burden so Minnesota can retain businesses and workers. Government cannot eliminate every financial pressure, but it should stop making those pressures worse.

MINNESOTA HOUSE DISTRICT 32B (ELECT 1)

Matt Norris (DFL)

City of residence: Blaine

Occupation: Attorney

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Member of the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission (governing body of the National Sports Center)
- Member of the Blaine Festival Committee
- Volunteer attorney with the Children’s Law Center



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. My campaign is about “building bridges and getting results” because I think voters want leaders who can bring together people from different backgrounds to get things done. I have been able to deliver significant results: securing \$103 million for the Highway 65 redesign, authoring increased funding for our schools and law enforcement, and leading on two landmark anti-fraud bills. And I did it while having the majority of my

bills supported by both Democrats and Republicans. While I’m proud of the results I’ve delivered, there’s still more work to do to make Minnesota the best possible state, which is why I’m running for reelection. I’m committed to listening to you, the voters of Blaine and Lexington, to respond to the issues most important to you.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. First, Minnesota must deliver on its quality-of-life promise: good schools, safe neighborhoods, clean lakes and rivers, and more. These are the factors that attract people to our state and keep them here. Second, we should use our existing strengths to supercharge economic growth. Examples include investing in the next generation of medical device technology and leading on the development of sustainable aviation fuel. Third, we should create a strong environment for startup businesses so we can develop the next round of great Minnesota companies that will help our state prosper well into the future.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. First, we need to make life more affordable for Minnesotans. I’m especially focused on “the three cares”: child care, health care and senior care. All three are such big budget items for families. If we can bring down the cost of these expenses, it leaves more room for gas, groceries and more. I’m also focused on lowering property taxes. Home property taxes have gotten out of control, and I’ve got a specific plan to reduce them. Second, we need to make sure state government is accountable and produces real results. The fraud we have seen against Minnesota’s public programs is unacceptable. I will build on the anti-fraud bills I’ve passed to conduct a top-to-bottom audit of state government. I will also author a bill requiring the state to measure the results of any new spending to make sure your tax dollars are spent wisely.

Leslie Larson (R)

City of residence: Blaine

Occupation: Small business owner, substitute teacher and Blaine City Councilwoman

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Blaine City Councilwoman
- Former foster care provider and adoptive mother
- Mary Ann Young Center board member



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I will bring a mom’s common sense, a businesswoman’s accountability and a councilwoman’s experience to the legislature. I’m ready to serve with integrity and fight for safe communities, strong schools, economic opportunity and a government that earns your trust.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. Minnesota’s lawmakers need to take fraud seriously and hold accountable those who steal from Minnesota taxpayers. Our tax dollars continue to pour into programs with minimal guardrails, creating opportunities for misuse and draining our economy. Our programs must have stronger oversight and tighter guardrails. It is also very important that we reverse the exodus of businesses and educated young people in Minnesota. Lowering taxes, reducing regulations and making Minnesota more competitive in the workplace will be necessary in the next five years.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Minnesota’s education system needs serious improvement. The Department of Education is fully funded, yet too little of that investment is reaching the classroom level. As a substitute teacher, I witness the overuse of technology and funding shortcuts in our schools that comes at the expense of quality education. With insight

into the classroom as well as being a mother of five school-aged children, I have a necessary perspective to assist in education policy.
Another challenge is affordability. Minnesota is one of the highest taxed states in the nation. As a city councilwoman, I voted against raising taxes in Blaine the last two years in a row. Financial pressure on families and small business must be addressed at the state level. I will continue to focus on responsible spending and tax policies that help families keep their hard-earned money.

How to vote early

By mail
To vote by mail, apply to have an absentee ballot mailed to you. You do not need to be registered to apply.
For your ballot to count, remember this important information:
• Read the instructions that come with your ballot carefully.

• You will need a witness when you vote and complete your ballot. The witness can be either a registered Minnesota voter or a notary.
• Return the ballot and forms right away after you finish. Your ballot will not count if it is received after Election Day.

In person
All voters have at least one location where they can vote early in person with an absentee ballot. Depending on where you live, there may be additional locations.
• You can vote in person at your county election office.
• In addition, you may be able to vote at your city office. Contact the clerk for more information.

For most elections, absentee voting locations must be open during their normal business hours starting 46 days before the election. In addition, locations offering absentee ballots for federal, state or county elections must be open:
• The last Saturday before Election Day (10 a.m. — 3 p.m.)

• The day before Election Day until 5 p.m.
• Some local jurisdictions may provide additional absentee voting days or hours beyond the above required days and times. Call your jurisdiction for more information.

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MINNESOTA HOUSE DISTRICT 36A (ELECT 1)

Jim DeMay (DFL)
City of residence: North Oaks
Occupation: Recently retired, former Public Affairs Director — CSL Seqirus, former adjunct professor at Hamline University in Public Administration
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Mounds View School Board, Treasurer, 2019-present
- Shoreview Rotary Club
- St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church, past Board Chair

Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I believe the government needs to provide the right opportunities to keep Minnesota a great place to live, work and, most importantly, raise a family. I am running for state house to make that a reality for all Minnesotans.

When I grew up, it was possible for the kid of a waitress and a small businessman to enjoy the middle class dream, but those opportunities just aren't there for people in the same way. I was able to succeed because of a great public education at Mounds View Schools, and I'm proud that my wife and I are now parents to two MVHS graduates.

I will fight to fully fund public education around the state, and you can count on me to fight for affordable health care and child care for working people like you.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. Minnesota needs to invest in and create opportunities for workers in order for our economy to thrive. This includes creating career pathways for the trades and medical industry in high school. Additionally, community college and trade schools must be accessible to all at a low cost. Finally, we need to lower the cost of and make child care more accessible so parents can participate in the workforce while knowing their kids are safe.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Going to the doctor shouldn't break the bank. But for too many Minnesotans, skyrocketing costs are making them choose between health care and other essential expenses. If elected, I will push to fund tax credits to reduce premiums for Minnesotans and eliminate anti-competitive practices of PhRMA to lower the price of prescription drugs. I will also work to create pathways for "Medicare for All" for those without insurance through their employers, as well as promote preventive services and regular vaccinations and check-ups to reduce overall costs.

Separately, I will support fully funding the newly created Minnesota Office of Inspector General that creates an independent oversight body to stop waste, fraud and abuse. I will work to protect taxpayer dollars by promoting efficiency reviews and regular audits. I will also work to modernize state computer systems to catch fraud, promote efficiency and increase accountability measures for nonprofits.

Sebastian Stoss (R)
City of residence: Circle Pines
Occupation: Photographer/Videographer
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Legislative aide at Minnesota Senate
- Citizen investigator
- Congressional staff member

Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I want to serve as our next state representative because politics as usual has failed our state. We have seen unprecedented levels of fraud, affordability has gotten worse and Minnesota student grades keep falling. I have demonstrated action. Just look at my investigation into Ramsey County's property tax spending uncovering how over \$38 million went out the back door to unaudited outside nonprofits and NGOs. I didn't sit on the sidelines; I followed the money, demanded answers and got results. The county commissioners backed off and lowered this year's property tax increase by 15%.

That's what I've done as a private citizen — now I would like to continue this work as state representative.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. At the state level, we can eliminate fraud, impose more oversight and provide tax relief. We need mandatory background checks and more required financial audits to both stop fraud that has already occurred and prevent further fraud from happening. Additionally, I support expanding whistleblower rewards to 10–20% of recovered funds with protections from retaliation. These are just a handful of initial solutions that can help prevent fraud. With the money we save once this is done, we can afford to provide tax relief to all Minnesotans. Specifically, we will be able to afford to lower the currently out-of-control property taxes, income taxes and car tab fees.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. The biggest challenge facing Minnesota currently is fraud. Fraud in Minnesota has become a national

embarrassment. Fraudsters have been able to steal from Minnesotans for years without any pushback from our government. This should anger every Minnesota taxpayer. To stop fraud, we need to increase oversight and transparency. For instance, counties are not currently legally required to audit organizations they give money to. This makes it easy for bad actors to get funding and misspend it. The second challenge facing Minnesota is how unaffordable living has become, especially due to out-of-control taxes. Property taxes in particular burden homeowners and prospective homeowners. People tell me they are getting priced out of their own homes and neighborhoods. To lower the tax burden and make Minnesota more affordable, we need private third-party assessors determining property valuations to ensure fairness, and we need to cap annual property taxes raises.

ANOKA COUNTY SHERIFF (ELECT 1)

CANDIDATE BRAD WISE DID NOT RESPOND

ANOKA COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 3 (ELECT 1)

Jeff Reinert
City of residence: Lino Lakes for over 50 years. I'm married to my wife, Lisa, for 37 years. We raised three daughters and have three grandbabies. I'm a business owner, currently an advisor in the biotech space and am Commander of Post 566 American Legion SAL in Lino Lakes.
Occupation: County commissioner
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- I've served our area for 20-plus years in public office, including as mayor of Lino Lakes.
- Lead Centerville Lake treatment efforts, finding outside funding for \$980,000 of the \$1.1 million cost.
- Lead the effort to purchase and install fencing around the Lino Lakes juvenile detention center, protecting nearby neighborhoods from runaways.

Q. Why do you want to serve on the County Board?
A. Running for commissioner of the fourth largest county is like applying for a job, and experience matters. I have the background needed to make sound decisions for taxpayers and residents and I know how to get things done

If you don't have experience, you can't ask the right questions. If

you can't ask the right questions, you won't make good decisions and won't serve the public well — in fact, you may do it harm. Good oversight and measurement lead to good management. While this common-sense approach is often missing in government, it is essential for operating efficiently and responsibly. As a business owner and your elected representative for more than 20 years, I have developed these skills and used them to improve how Anoka County operates.

I'm running for reelection because I love this community and want to continue making a positive difference for the people I serve.

Q. What can the county do in the next five years to help the area prosper?
A. The overall goal should be to grow the county's tax base and household incomes while keeping Anoka County an affordable, safe and desirable place to live.

We do this by supporting the cities and townships in our county. Although zoning property to attract residential and/or commercial development is in the hands of each city, the county plays a role in assisting cities to help navigate what is needed for development. As an example, our area has many hydrology and wetland issues as it relates to development, so helping cities work with the Anoka County Conservation District, the DNR and the Rice Creek Watershed District is a big asset. I often meet with economic development directors from various cities in my district to bring the right parties together

at the table to discuss issues and get things done.

Q. What are two challenges that the county faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A.

- New Jail: Challenges come from some people in the county wanting to build an oversized and overpriced jail. Even a study done by the State of Minnesota concluded we need only 70% of what the county wants to build. If we downsize the plan, litigation can be settled, we can build a jail the right size and save Anoka County taxpayers not only the cost of the overbuild, but also the ongoing cost of running an oversized jail.
- FLOCK Drones: FLOCK cameras currently read license plates and are developing facial recognition capabilities. The company proposed a drone network covering Anoka County. Most county board members opposed the proposal, yet the sheriff signed a one-year contract set to begin in January. I believe a decision of this magnitude deserves public input and board oversight, and I will bring it back for discussion and transparency.

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ANOKA COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 3 (ELECT 1)

Melissa “Mel” Lawlis

City of residence: Lino Lakes

Occupation: Over 27 years with Anoka County Human Services, serving families and vulnerable residents through program support, casework and community services. Extensive experience in fraud prevention and investigations, ensuring program integrity and protecting county resources. Recognized policy expert involved in developing, interpreting and implementing county and state guidelines. Experienced trainer, mentoring staff and strengthening department-wide consistency and compliance.

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Centerville Lions Club (2020–present); President, 2024–2026, leading service projects, fundraising and community outreach.
- Homeowners association board member (2005–present); President for over 10 years, overseeing neighborhood governance and long-term planning.
- Centennial Youth Hockey Association Golf Tournament Chair, two years.



about our community, and I believe I can make a difference. My husband and I have lived in District 3 for 22 years, where we raised our two boys. I’ve also worked for Anoka County for more than 27 years and have been very involved in our community. I bring real experience working in county government and an understanding of how the county works. I believe in asking questions, looking for better and more efficient ways to do things, and making sure we are responsible with taxpayer dollars. If elected, this will be my full-time job. I want to be involved in the communities, talking with people, listening to their concerns and making sure they feel heard. I will work hard; be accessible; and represent District 3 with integrity, professionalism and civility. I would truly be honored to earn your vote.

Q. What can the county do in the next five years to help the area prosper?
A. Over the next five years, I think the county needs to focus on responsible growth and making sure we are planning for the future. That means maintaining and improving our roads and infrastructure, supporting public safety, and making sure our communities continue to be places where people want to live, work and raise their families.
We also need to make it easier to do business with the county by looking at our processes, using technology where it makes sense and finding more efficient ways to provide services. I believe the county should work closely with our cities, townships, schools and local businesses so we aren’t working in silos.

Most importantly, as we grow, we need to ask the questions, set priorities, plan ahead and make sure we are being responsible with taxpayer dollars.

Q. What are two challenges that the county faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Two challenges facing Anoka County are the increasing cost of providing county services and the future of the county jail. As costs rise, we need to take a hard look at how we spend taxpayer dollars. With my experience working for the county, I know there are opportunities to improve processes and find efficiencies. We need to ask, “Is this required?” “Is there a better way to do it?” “Is this the best use of taxpayer dollars?” We also need to pursue state and federal grants and work with legislators to address unfunded mandates that increase county costs.
The jail is another major challenge. We need a safe, functional facility, but we also need to make the right long-term decision for taxpayers. That means asking the tough questions, looking at all reasonable options, and working with our cities and communities to find a practical and responsible solution.

CENTERVILLE MAYOR (ELECT 1)

Nancy N. Golden

City of residence: Centerville

Occupation: Medical sales

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Elected Mayor of Centerville in 2024



opportunities that align with the needs and goals of our residents.

Q. What can the City Council do in the next five years to help the city prosper?
A. My vision is to help our city thrive over the next five years by prioritizing fiscal responsibility and strategic decisions.

Q. What are two challenges in your city and how might you solve them if elected?
A. With the challenge of limited state funding, making informed local-level choices becomes even more critical.

CENTERVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEMBER AT LARGE (ELECT 2)

Anita Rios

City of residence: Centerville

Occupation: Talent management consultant

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Centerville council member
- Centerville’s Economic Development Authority
- Empowering Small Minnesota Communities Advisory Committee



I currently work as a consultant after retiring from a 35-year career in public higher education.

Q. What can the city Council do in the next five years to help the city prosper?
A. Implement the 2026 Downtown Vision Plan: I will support updates to the city’s zoning codes that align with the recommendations in the 2026 Downtown Vision Plan. I will also advocate for a clear request-for-proposals (RFP) process that encourages developers to bring forward projects with the amenities residents want to see in Centerville’s downtown area.
Increase opportunities for citizen engagement: I will continue promoting meaningful opportunities for residents to participate in planning and decision making. This includes town hall meetings, surveys, advisory groups and facilitated discussions so that everyone who wants to have a voice can be heard.
Balance fiscal responsibility with stewardship of city infrastructure: I will continue to support thoughtful, responsible decision making that keeps taxes as low as possible for Centerville residents while also addressing the city’s essential public safety, infrastructure and maintenance needs.

Q. What are two challenges in your city and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Deferred city infrastructure maintenance: Centerville faces

several important-yet-costly infrastructure needs that must be addressed thoughtfully over time. These needs affect services residents rely on every day: safe drinking water, reliable sewer systems, well-maintained roads. Soon, the city will need to replace a failing well, inspect its sewer system and replace aging equipment. Careful prioritization and sequence of these projects while seeking outside funding whenever possible will protect essential services while keeping tax levies reasonable.
Economic development: To make the most of the Downtown Vision Plan, Centerville should take a proactive approach to attracting the right kinds of investment. Rather than waiting to see what proposals come forward, I will advocate for a clear business development policy that gives developers guidance and incentives to bring forward projects that reflect residents’ priorities. This approach can help add desired amenities while preserving the small-town character that makes Centerville special.

CANDIDATE LINDA M. BROUSSARD DID NOT RESPOND



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SPECIAL ELECTION FOR CENTERVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEMBER AT LARGE (ELECT 1)

Kale Haluptzok
City of residence: Centerville
Occupation: Small Business Owner
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Parks & Recreation — Liaison
- Economic Development Authority — board member
- Coaching youth soccer and hockey

Q. Why do you want to serve on the City Council?
A. I want to serve on the City Council because this community is home to me. I grew up here, and I've had the opportunity to see our area change and grow over the years. Now, I'm raising

my own family here, so I have an even greater personal interest in making sure our community remains a great place to live. I care about the people who live here, and I want to make sure their voices are heard. I want to be a council member who listens, is accessible and works with residents to find practical solutions to the issues we face.

I want to give back to the community that helped shape me and help create a safe, welcoming and strong community where my family, and future generations, can thrive.

Q. What can the City Council do in the next five years to help the city prosper?
A. Over the next five years, the City Council can help Centerville prosper by supporting local businesses, maintaining our infrastructure and investing in the services residents rely on.

Q. What are two challenges in your city and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Two challenges I see in our city are preserving what makes Centerville special while also being open to thoughtful change, and making fiscally responsible decisions.

As our area grows, we need to protect Centerville's character and history while embracing new ideas and opportunities that benefit residents.

We also need to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. I would focus on responsible spending, prioritizing essential services and making sure we get the most value from every dollar. I believe we can respect our city's past, thoughtfully plan for its future and make responsible decisions that keep our community strong.

LEXINGTON MAYOR (ELECT 1)

CANDIDATE MIKE MURPHY DID NOT RESPOND

LEXINGTON CITY COUNCIL MEMBER AT LARGE (ELECT 2)

Heidi Fust
City of residence: Lexington
Occupation: Environmental health, safety and maintenance manager for a Minnesota medical device manufacturer
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Volunteer, Anoka County Disaster Response Team — Current
- External Board Member, Midwest Consortium for Hazardous Waste Worker Training — Current
- Webmaster, Minnesota Mineral Club — Past

Q. Why do you want to serve on the City Council?
A. I want to serve because I care about Lexington and the people who call it home. I believe local government works best when residents feel heard; information is understandable; and decisions are made with preparation, fairness and respect. My professional experience has taught me to listen carefully, solve practical problems, manage resources responsibly and bring people together around shared goals.

I am not running with a personal agenda or because I believe I already have every answer. I am running to learn,

ask thoughtful questions and contribute a safety-focused, problem-solving perspective. I would be honored to help make decisions that support dependable city services, responsible spending, well-maintained neighborhoods and a strong sense of community for both renters and homeowners.

Q. What can the City Council do in the next five years to help the city prosper?
A. Over the next five years, the City Council can help Lexington prosper by protecting essential services, maintaining infrastructure, budgeting carefully and communicating clearly about priorities and costs. Prosperity should also include a community where residents feel connected and local businesses are welcomed as partners.

I would support exploring practical, voluntary partnerships, such as business sponsorships for seasonal streetlight decor or community activities, with fair rules and appropriate recognition. I would also like to build on the city newsletter with clearer updates, more community information and a fair way for local businesses to share Lexington-specific offers.

These ideas should begin modestly, be evaluated carefully and avoid placing unnecessary costs on taxpayers. Thoughtful growth should strengthen Lexington without losing the qualities that make it feel like home.

Q. What are two challenges in your city and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Two challenges I would focus on are strengthening communication and managing community needs responsibly.

First, residents should be able to understand what the city is considering, why decisions are being made and how to share concerns. I would support clearer updates, more accessible information and additional opportunities for resident input.

Second, Lexington must address needs such as infrastructure, traffic, neighborhood maintenance and community improvements without creating unnecessary taxpayer burden. I would ask for clear cost information, consider long-term maintenance, explore grants and voluntary partnerships when appropriate, and favor manageable improvements over expensive promises.

For traffic concerns, I would listen to residents, review available data, and work with city and county partners before recommending solutions. My approach would be to understand the problem first, then pursue practical options that fit Lexington's needs and resources.

CANDIDATE KIM JAY DEVRIES DID NOT RESPOND

CANDIDATE BRANDON WINGE DID NOT RESPOND

CENTENNIAL SCHOOL BOARD (ELECT 3)

Jessica Schwinn
City of residence: Centerville
Occupation: Educator
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Founded and run Centennial Area Mutual Aid Network
- Treasurer, Centennial ISD 12 School Board
- District Systems Accountability committee member

Q. What are your top three priorities for the school district?
A. One of my priorities is continuing to work on communication and transparency in the district. Being clear in communication and including all necessary information is the best way to build trust in the district. Another one of my priorities is working on making the district a welcoming, inclusive and safe space for all students. School should be a place that all students feel welcome, not a space they should have to worry about bullying or other unwelcoming behavior.

Lastly, lunch for students has become a major concern of parents. In both the middle school and high school, the timing and length of lunch is an issue. Some students at the middle school are eating lunch as early as 9:51 a.m. District wide, a number of students won't eat lunch or throw much of it away as they don't like the taste and/or appearance of what is being served.

Q. What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
A. Education funding in Minnesota has not kept pace with inflation. There is a big lack of funding for Centennial, especially compared to neighboring districts. To fill this gap, districts rely on taxpayers via operating levies. The metro average for districts with operating levies is more than \$1500 per student. Centennial's current levy is about \$996 per student. Nearby districts like White Bear Lake (\$1668 per student) and Mounds View (\$2204 per student) receive significantly more in operating levy per pupil. Unfortunately, this funding gap affects everything from class size and student support to what kind of electives and specialist classes can be offered to students. Until the Minnesota Legislature fixes the funding formula, Centennial will have to continue to make due with what we get and be good stewards while also planning for a rainy day.

Q. What are your opinions on the two Centennial Forward referendum questions set for this year's ballot?
A. As a current school board member, I cannot weigh in on whether community members should vote yes or no on the referendum questions. I can say that the district began this process almost two years ago. The board urged the district to conduct this process in a transparent way with a high level of community involvement. Throughout the process, an input team of 60 community members, parents and staff met to give feedback so that priorities on the plan could be established and adjusted accordingly. A design team made up of district leaders and staff also met throughout the process to give feedback and refine plans. I am satisfied with the time and care that was taken to establish this long-range plan. The current school board voted unanimously to place these questions on the ballot in November.

VOTERS' GUIDE 2026

CENTENNIAL SCHOOL BOARD (ELECT 3)

Joe Ackerman
City of residence: Lexington
Occupation: Chief engineer of critical operations U.S. Bank, St. Paul
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Volunteering for Centennial Elementary Parent Organization (CEPO) for 2.5 years
- Attend regular city council meetings and applying for board positions (unsuccessful)



- Heading up Lovell Road safety improvements in Anoka County (neighborhood collective)
- Q. What are your top three priorities for the school district?**
A.
- Improved school breakfast/lunch program — better quality food and common-sense reduction of waste.
 - Invest in facility infrastructure and engineering. Keeping up with facility standards with regard to safety, efficiency and modernization.
 - Call for more parent/community involvement. Encourage volunteering and school board meeting attendance.

Q. What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
A. Funding deficits, rising operating costs and aging facilities.

Q. What are your opinions on the two Centennial Forward referendum questions set for this year's ballot?
A. I hope to see them pass. When schools do better, the community does better. When schools are not invested in, the community suffers with students who do not get the support they need, teacher and staff burnout (added demands on them) and lower enrollment.

Gloria Murphy
City of residence: Lexington
Occupation: Senior patient access specialist in the medical technology industry, and small-business co-owner
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Centennial ISD 12 school board member
- Director of Centennial Area Education Foundation
- City of Lexington planning and zoning commissioner, and parks board member



and parents should feel confident sending them there each day. We also need to give teachers and staff the tools they need, direct resources toward classrooms, and be careful with every taxpayer dollar.

As both a school board member and Centennial mom, I want our decisions to be practical, thoughtful and focused on helping every child learn, grow and succeed.

Q. What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
A. Centennial's greatest challenge is meeting the needs of students and staff while the district and the families we serve are both facing rising costs. We must protect strong classroom instruction, reasonable class sizes, student services, transportation, technology and special education. We also need to close achievement gaps, keep students safe, care for aging facilities, and recruit and retain excellent staff. That means looking honestly at what is working, what needs improvement and whether our spending is actually helping students.

Parents and taxpayers deserve clear explanations of the choices before the board and the tradeoffs involved. The goal is simple: children should be known, challenged, supported

and prepared for life, and families should be able to trust that decisions are being made carefully and responsibly.

Q. What are your opinions on the two Centennial Forward referendum questions set for this year's ballot?
A. I support both Centennial Forward questions, but I do not view voter approval as a blank check. As a Centennial mom, I want every child to have excellent teachers, safe schools and opportunities to succeed. As a taxpayer, I know what families throughout our community are feeling. Everything costs more right now, and my family feels that pressure too. That is why every dollar must be justified, clearly explained and carefully managed.

Question 1 would provide \$375 per pupil annually to help maintain teachers, academic programs, services and class sizes. Question 2 would address safety, aging building systems, learning spaces and capacity needs.

I voted to place both questions on the ballot after years of planning and community input. If voters approve them, I will ask hard questions, demand clear budgets and make sure the district delivers what it promised. Our children deserve strong schools, and taxpayers deserve accountability.

Laura Gannon
City of residence: Circle Pines
Occupation: Senior principal product security engineer, and small-business owner
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- SD36 DFL outreach and inclusion officer (2023-2026)
- Volunteer door guard at Don Julio's following Operation Metro raid
- Girl Scout Troop Leader, Troop 27519



never designed for them. We need adequate paraprofessional support and flexible teaching practices. Third, honesty in education means trusting our teachers with evidence-based curriculum, accurate history and science taught as science. Our kids deserve the critical thinking skills to navigate a complicated world. All three require competitive teacher compensation and retaining the talented educators we already have.

Q. What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
A. The major issue facing Centennial is chronic underfunding. We spend just \$995 per pupil in local operating levy funding compared to a metro average of \$1,519. That gap is not abstract — it is the reading interventionist we cannot afford, the special education para burning out by December and the aging infrastructure we patch instead of fix. Our middle school is at 125% capacity. Teachers are leaving the profession because they are underpaid and overworked, often carrying tens of thousands of dollars in graduate-degree debt. We cannot address mental health needs, modernize security or close achievement gaps without first closing this funding gap. Our

children's education should not be a geographical lottery.

Q. What are your opinions on the two Centennial Forward referendum questions set for this year's ballot?
A. I support both Centennial Forward referendum questions. Question 1, the \$375 per-pupil operating levy, is essential to maintain strong programming and retain the educators our students depend on. Question 2, the \$108.9 million facilities bond, will modernize aging buildings, strengthen safety and security, and address capacity challenges across every school. The school board approved both questions unanimously after years of community input and data analysis. Without this investment, we face more painful cuts that will be felt directly in classrooms. Strong schools do not happen by accident — they happen when communities choose to invest in them. Every child in Centennial deserves a school that was built for them, not just the ones in wealthier zip codes.

Tom Knisely
City of residence: Blaine
Occupation: Media relations coordinator, Three Rivers Park District
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Chair, Centennial School Board
- Director, Intermediate 916 School Board
- Past president, Centennial High School Baseball Boosters



Alternative Learning Center and one for the Pines to help our students whose personal struggles impact their learning. My hope moving forward is to hire a social worker for the middle school and high school as well. Maintaining strong programs is vital. One good example is the expansion of our new Career Pathways Program from manufacturing to also include computer science, health and sports medicine.

Q. What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
A. Equitable funding for property-poor school districts like Centennial and unfunded state mandates that drive up costs are major issues facing Centennial. Due to funding inequities, Centennial Schools receive less state funding than other districts of similar size. This forces Centennial to meet the growing needs of the district with less money than others receive. It's difficult, but through sound fiscal management and constant rightsizing, we've managed. Unfortunately, new unfunded mandates from the state are making this increasingly difficult. New costs for summer unemployment, paid family medical leave and funding cuts to mandated special education programs are projected to cost Centennial Schools an estimated \$2.7 million on an annual basis.

Q. What are your opinions on the two Centennial Forward referendum questions set for this year's ballot?
A. I support both questions. The operating levy will help maintain class sizes, services for students and strong academic programs. The levy will provide an extra \$375 per pupil annually. Even with this increase, our operating levy will still be below the average of north metro districts.

The bond referendum is focused on urgent deferred maintenance (fixing the things that need to be fixed), school safety (new secure entrances and other safety enhancements), remodeling and additions that anticipate future growth and improve the day-to-day operations of our schools. The original plan came in at a cost of \$224 million. After dozens of public meetings and hundreds of public comments, plans were adjusted. The cost of the bond levy was cut in half and is now just \$109 million.

The cost of these two questions will cost the average homeowner roughly \$25 a month, the amount of a Carbone's pizza.