IMPORTANT VOTER INFORMATION IN RESPONSE TO BRIAN’S ADVERTISED “FACTS TO CONSIDER”

Brian Werschem’s FACTS TO CONSIDER

Supervisor Brian Werschem inherited a four-year general fund deficit of nearly $1,000,000 dollars and a road revolving fund with an $95,300 dollar deficit. The general fund’s “savings account” was so low; the Township borrowed money just to pay its bills until property taxes were collected. This is a fact that can be verified at: http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1751_31338--,00.html

Roads

Since taking office, Brian worked with the Road Commission to obtain grants for road improvements rather than using your tax dollars. He appointed a representative to the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission which distributes Federal road funds throughout North Ottawa and Muskegon Counties. This secured nearly $1,000,000 in funding to completely reconstruct Hile Road (from Airline to Sheridan) and Sheridan (from Heights Ravenna to Hile) at no cost to the Fruitport Township residents, in 2013 and 2014. Brian feels it’s smarter to maintain existing roads with preventative maintenance and resurfacing (Airline, Dangl, Mill, Iron, and Brooks) rather than using tax dollars for expansions.

Bike Paths

The new bike paths represent a cost to the Fruitport tax payer and a future liability and only benefit the Commercial areas around the Lakes Mall. Bike paths are an important non-motorized transportation mode; Brian continues to work with the state to connect the north and south bike paths, using Federal and State money at no cost to the Fruitport taxpayer.

Parks

Brian secured $465,000 in grants to construct the new Sheringer soccer park.

Public Utilities

Rather than spend millions of dollars on water and sewer extensions in rural areas where people do not want or request it, Brian focused efforts on maintaining and repairing the existing infrastructure. Spending water and sewer customer money on expanding the utility systems to rural areas is not fair to the existing customers, exacerbates the potential for urban sprawl, and creates a future liability with very few new connections to offset the costs.

Ron Cooper’s Response to Brian’s Facts!

It would be enlightening for people to go to the web that Brian suggests. You will not find the $1,000,000 and $95,000 amounts because they seem to be made-up figures. You will find that when I left office after the March 2008 audit, Fruitport township’s total fund balance was $1,183,738. This figure speaks for itself as an indicator of the financial health of the township at that time.

If we borrowed for a short term cash flow need, it would be so we would not have to cash in a higher paying interest CD for a short amount of time.

Roads: We also worked with the road commission to rebuild roads at no cost to our township residents: Pontuluna, between Airline and Harvey, Brooks between Hts. Ravenna and Sternberg, and others. It’s standard practice and simple to do. We also, on our own, got over two million dollars ear-marked toward on and off ramps on I-96 at Sternberg in Congress by Rep. Hoeckstra. We held numerous meetings with Michigan Department of Transportation to get it approved by them, which they did. It was sent to Washington and Brian let it go unused??

Brian seems to think that if you live on a dirty, dusty, pot-holed, and wash-board gravel road, that it’s not the township’s concern. I believe it’s a health and safety issue and the township should be helpful. During my last term we converted 5 such roads.

Bike Paths: Brian says that Bike Paths are a future liability and only benefit commercial areas. I believe that they add to safety, health, and a better quality of life and, ideally, every street would have a bike path. As for the north and south connecting bike path, we had between a half million and one million dollars pledged for it. Brian was not interested enough to even look at it, and most of the pledged money was used on bike paths in Ottawa County.

Parks: The Sheringer soccer park land was purchased by trading other land during my administration. The grant Brian claims he secured was done by the Parks Commission and a paid professional grant writer.

Public Utilities - Water: Evidently Brian’s challenge has been to maintain and repair our existing infrastructure. Big deal! Most of our system is less than 50 years old and doesn’t require much to maintain. During my term in office, we maintained and also added 11 extensions to our water trunk lines, most were needed to complete the looping in our master plan, and to remedy the areas of stale water. Previously the water department had to frequently run water into...
An independent study concluded that Fruitport has the lowest sewer rates in the county which are among the lowest in the state. Our water rates will not go up again due to not spending millions on needless expansions. If residents want water or sewer, the township will gladly work with them to finance and install it: but only if it is wanted by the residents!

Zoning Enforcement

Brian demands that all zoning ordinances are equally applied to all businesses and residents. No exceptions are given to family members, employees, or friends. **THIS WILL NOT CHANGE!**

Lawsuits

Brian ended the lawsuit with the racetrack which was costing too much money with no chance of success.

He joined the Norton Shores lawsuit against Muskegon Heights to stop multiple water quality violations and misappropriation of your money. As a result, Muskegon Heights reimbursed hundreds of thousands of dollars and brought the water plant in compliance with Federal and State Health standards.

Summary

Over the past four years, Brian cut unsustainable spending levels by reducing operational costs by over 25%! This was done by eliminating positions, making organizational changes, reducing employee costs, getting out from under the existing water supply contract, and paying off high-interest debt. This has stabilized the general fund which no longer borrows money to pay bills and allowed for an additional detective to follow up on the nearly 7,000 annual calls for service. It is important that Fruitport citizens know the facts relative to these issues rather than misinformation circulated for personal gain. These facts are undisputable and verifiable through independent audits and Township records that are available to you at Fruitport Township Hall and [http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1751_31038--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1751_31038--,00.html).

We cannot afford to go back to the days of spending beyond our means, nor do we need to.

ditches to keep it fresh and safe to drink. Most of those problems were solved with the looping that we did connecting the dead end lines, and it also gave people on those lines the ability to hook up to fresh water. We did it within our budget and no one was forced to hook up if they didn’t want to at the time the line went through. Most of the looping that was done will be needed if the water tower is built at Broadway and Brooks Roads

Public Utilities - Sewer: I extended sewer lines sized for the entire south half of the township which includes the Mall, Calvary Christian Schools, and the Village. We also put in a sewer line that was not needed at that time, down Sternberg Road from Quarterline to I-96 during the rebuilding of Sternberg Road because it was the least expensive to do at that time. It’s now being used and our sewer rates are still the lowest.

Zoning Enforcement: Actually, I believe Brian has gone beyond the law and used the zoning ordinances and assessing department to abuse certain township citizens. It’s one of the reasons that I’m running for supervisor. Government’s job is to protect its citizens, including the most defenseless, not do them in as has been happening.

Lawsuits: The race track lawsuit was not costing the township any money because I personally accepted responsibility for the township’s legal expenses and have been making monthly payments for over four years. I agreed to do that because I felt confident that the township would get a settlement of over $700,000 and did not want to see the township citizens lose that money because of political motivation. Brian convinced our board to settle it for $10,000 and put the money in the General Fund.

Brian and the township joined Norton Shores to proceed with a lawsuit against Muskegon Heights that, indeed proved to be, in his words ‘a frivolous lawsuit’. Reading the contract with the Heights, would make you wonder how the judge would rule in the township’s favor, and the judge ruled against it.

Summary: It could take pages to refute the false and misleading statements made in Brian’s summary. It’s doubtful that the 25% figure is correct. The 2008 and 2012 audits don’t support this statement. It’s also doubtful that employee costs are less today than four years ago, OR getting out of the existing water supply contract has stabilized the general fund. His facts are disputable and are not verified through the township’s records. Check the website that Brian has offered. It holds the township annual reports and see if you can find his statements true.

We need to go back to compassionate local government – we were not spending beyond our means, but using our resources to benefit the health, safety, and quality of life of our residents.
Promises made by Brian during his 2008 campaign for supervisor

What did he get done?

- Changed no roads from gravel to asphalt
  
  Within a month of being elected, Brian informed the residents on roads built in the late 1940s and 1950s that had never been accepted by the county that they would have to maintain their own roads. The roads were maintained during both of Ron's terms in office and also during other supervisors' terms. These citizens pay property taxes and gas taxes, but because their homes were built at a time that our government failed to take care of the details of construction and ownership, Brian decided it would be a nice way to save some money. He may have participated with the county road commission with some chip and seal resurfacing and other road commission projects.

- Added no bike paths or lanes

- Added no water extension to trunk lines

New DPW Building

The DPW has wanted a new building for years. It has been a little tight but they have been getting by. Brian evidently decided that it was time to build them a new building. Its a half million-dollar building - the most expensive building the township has built for itself. And where did Brian decide to build it? On ten acres of property on the corner of Brooks Road and Broadway that was supposedly bought for a location for a water tower which was in our 50-year-old water distribution design. Whether it is still relevant is open for discussion. That location is about as far from the township hall as you can get. There is no water line in either direction about 1/2 mile on Brooks and over a mile on Broadway. Both of those pipes would need to be put in before building a water tower. A well has been put in so that there is water for the building. I always thought that Fruitport Township government worked really well with the water department and government offices together. They could help each other with phones and customer service, and it was healthy having them within sight. I expect that another person will need to be hired to accommodate the separate offices. Also, the building is about as far from our water and sewer customers as you can get which means extra driving time during the day, every day, just to get to the customers who need services, especially emergency shut-offs in case of accidents or line breakage. It seems to me that that money could have been better spent getting water lines to people who have to deal with bad water and expensive purifying systems. Since the building was built next to the old dump, they may not be able to drink water from their own well.

- Started a lawsuit with Muskegon Heights over a water rate issue that clearly contradicted the water services agreement and lost.

- Agreed to a settlement of $10,000 by the race track for not paying close to a million dollars in fees owed to the township. Brian settled it with very little knowledge of the success the township had in court. I rather doubt that he read even 1/4 of the court documents. The settlement was a huge loss to the township.

- Stop wasting money on frivolous lawsuits
What did Ron do during the previous term in office?

5
• Converted 5 roads from gravel to asphalt
  • Maintained the dozen or so old roads which the county wouldn't accept.

 Participated with the county road commission to do chip and seal to resurface many miles of roads and other road commission projects.

 Washboard gravel roads can be very dangerous, especially for young and inexperienced drivers. The vehicle can easily vibrate off the road. We have had citizens die and also become permanently disabled from these kinds of accidents. Our township leadership needs to be aware and carry a burden for the importance of converting gravel roads to asphalt.

6 & 2
• During his two terms he established 6 Bike Paths and 2 Bike Lanes
  • He also purchased the equipment to maintain the bike paths during the winter, including the sidewalk near Beach School.

 1. The bike path on two sides of the Mall frontage.
 2. The bike path on Henry in front of Meijers
 3. The bike path on Sheridan between Mr. Garfield & Sternberg
 4. The bike path along Mr. Garfield both sides of Sheridan
 5. Worked with others to establish the bike path from the Fruitport Village to the Spring Lake bike path
 6. The bike lanes, both sides of Postauna between the middle school & Harvey
 7. Bike path on Independence Drive, Harvey to Meijers

11
• Added 11 extensions to our water trunk lines
  • Most of these extensions were important looping in the master plan that had been left unfinished for 30+ years.

1. Heights Ravenna Road east to Brooks Road
2. Brooks Road from Trail Side to Huzkamps
3. Broadway Avenue east to bike path (Muskatawwa Trail)
4. Dangl Road between Aline and Sternberg
5. Sternberg Road from Dangl to Brooks Road
6. Stringer Road from Mr. Garfield to Sternberg
7. Brooks Road from Sternberg to Ellis Road
8. Ellis Road east to Brooks Road
9. Harvey Street, Wilson to Jedson
10. Brooks Road - connected water mains north and south of Norris Creek
11. Wilson Road – connection line, Harvey Street to Norton Shores

• With Norton Shores negotiated through the courts an agreement to have Muskegon Heights return over $100,000 that they had intermingled with their general fund from the water fund.

• Since the water service agreement was negotiated during Ron’s first term, with his direct involvement, Fruitport and Norton Shores have had lower wholesale water cost than either Muskegon or Grand Haven customers pay.

After a thorough examination and studying the agreement with the race track, I knew they were sending the Fruitport Township share of the betting formula away from Fruitport. They didn’t expect us to know what they were doing. It was in their best interest to work behind the scenes to make sure I wasn’t re-elected. The new board would not familiarize themselves with the case. There was a lot at stake for track ownership. Ron initiated the suit against the race track for not paying about a million dollars in betting fees to the township using funds from the track designed for that purpose, not from the general fund. One of the track attorneys, Nelson Westin, had acknowledged that the track would probably settle for between $700,000 and $800,000 when they could no longer stall the case through the courts and if the township board stayed committed. The national ownership agreed in court to pay for the state ownership’s obligation when that time came.

Ron agreed to be responsible for the township’s attorney bill personally from that time on because he could not bear to see the township lose that much money because of petty politics by the township board, and with the understanding he would be reimbursed for his expenses when the settlement took place. He is now making monthly payments on that bill. The track owners were having difficulty settling it any longer and were at a point where they would be getting the judge’s decision if they didn’t settle it. The settlement took place without Ron’s knowledge and for a ridiculously small amount of $10,000. Since the township settled for such a small amount, Brian recommended to just put the settlement into the general fund.

NOTE:
Absentee Ballot voters can change their vote by going to Fruitport Township Office and asking.
Is this what Brian calls “Positive Leadership”? 

Bonding the law and even making up laws to do people in (and to show them who is boss)! Following are some examples:

**Critter Café**
Airline Rd., Fruitport

Christine’s Critter Café, located across the road from the fire station on Airline Road, Christine puts her heart and soul into rescuing abandoned pets and finding new homes for them. During the 2010 pandemic, she was averaging about 200 pets per year. She and her volunteers are the only ones in their area that take in cats and dogs as well as rabbits, rats, and birds. Before moving into her location, she requested a letter of permission from the township on which she was seeking. Since the township officials were understanding and cooperative, they allowed her to go ahead.

After operating her rescue for about a year, she told all her “animals must be removed from the property until all necessary approvals are given by the Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Appeals.” Brian’s actions could be condemned, and she requested the police department to remove the animals, and that she should not do it. She contacted the police department and told them she should do it, and they told her to go to the office and talk to him, which she did.

According to Christine and others who were nearby, Brian bothered about 5,000 people who said that the animals should be removed from the property and that the property should be closed down. Christine continued to tell them that she would continue to remove the animals and that she would continue to remove them. She also mentioned that she had contacted the police department and told them about the situation. The police department told her that they would remove the animals and that she should not do it. Christine continued to tell them that she would keep removing the animals and that she would continue to remove them.

On Channel 8 news she said he had no knowledge of the Critter Café existing. Brian told an ad on December 1999 that he needed a new place to live. Next to it (about 12°), is an article about the Critter Café Rescue, which was written by a picture of her sign, and Brian seems to be looking right at it. Usually, when someone puts a sign in the paper with his picture in it, they check out the last once. Additionally, the fire and police department driveway faces her sign and Brian probably uses that drive once it is a week.

Christine seems to be a pleasant and open person, who might not be able to defend herself. Fortunately, the public came forward and offered to do what they could to help her. Christine spends her limited retirement on her rescue and has no funds left over. One person, who stopped forward was an attorney, Ginni Nolita, from Rockford who started a conversation with the township attorney, and Christine has been in limbo ever since, not knowing from day to day what is going to happen to her and her rescue.

She knows that the Department of Agriculture, the DNR, Animal Control, and Pound Buidedies had been contacted by the township because they had contacted her. Recently, she was in the hospital for a few days because she was injured by a cat that was dropped off at her rescue by an unknown person. Even though volunteers looked after the rescue while she was in the hospital, it was a worry to her of what the township might do to her rescue while she was gone.

**Mark Diederich**
236 E. Pontaluna Rd., Fruitport

Mark and his wife, Jane, have been taking care of yard wanderers since the 1940s. When I was in office a couple neighbors complained that his place was not neat enough to suit them. Mark also lives in a 100-year-old house that his grandfather built. I checked out the legalities with what Mark was doing and came to the conclusion that he was agriculture and pre-existed any of our zoning ordinances, and under the law he should be able to continue.

In 1995, Fred Constantine from Michigan Township Services, wrote Mark that the township has no problem with the composition of the site and acknowledged that an unlicensed van was a farm vehicle.

One of the neighbors told me at that time to get rid of Mark. When I told him that he was within the law I was told to get rid of him immediately, because the township government can do it. At that point I realized that our township government should be protecting Mark, not doing him in. With that background, I’m assuming that the same neighbor told Brian the same thing because in early 2011, Fruitport Township got an order to enter Mark’s home and start the process to condemn and demolish it. It’s my opinion that the judge who issued the order to enter Mark’s home and start the process to condemn and demolish it wasn’t fully informed of Mark’s situation. Yellow tape was put across his driveway thus putting him out of business and it has never been taken down by the township.

Brian again told to do what you are given. Brian then told to use angry posters, supporting the resolution and told him that he was not able to do it. He told him that he was able to do it, but that he couldn’t do it. The treasurer did.

He says he eliminated over $500,000 in interest payments on the township’s bonds. “I went down with what money was there but actually he didn’t do it, but the treasurer did.”

Brian stated in his advertisements that “Eliminated over three million dollars in debt at no additional cost to the taxpayers.” More simply, he paid the water sewer bond payments with money that was in those bonds and actually he didn’t do it, but the treasurer did.

Misleading Advertising

Brian states in his advertising that he “Eliminated over three million dollars in debt at no additional cost to the taxpayers.” More simply, he paid the water sewer bond payments with money that was in those bonds and actually he didn’t do it, but the treasurer did.

He says he eliminated “over $500,000 in interest payments on the bonds.” “I went down with what money was there but actually he didn’t do it, but the treasurer did.”

**Using the Assessor to Spy**

I have been made aware that the township, under Brian’s direction, is using the township assessor to spy on our citizens’ property because the township zoning and building department can’t keep up with a warrant.

On Willow Road, the township assessor entered private property and took pictures of what was a legal operation that could not be seen from any other property and gave the pictures to township services.

At the same time, the assessor took pictures of some cars on neighboring property that no one could see except from the property she was standing on, and turned them in to the township services. I have first-hand knowledge of this. I was told by a very reliable source that the assessor also went into a fenced-in area behind a garage that had an unlicensed car that no one could see from outside the fence. The unlicensed car must have been that of a son away at college or in the service. Whether or not the car was there legally is not the question. I believe it is against the law to use the township assessor in this way.

The New Water Agreement

I don’t believe it’s a good idea to stop buying water from the Muskegon Heights water plant.

1. Fruitport and Norton Shores have paid less for water than Muskegon water plant customers for nearly all of 40 years.
2. It’s been healthy for Muskegon water plant customers because Muskegon was limited on how much more they could charge their customers over what the Heights charged.
3. With Fruitport and Norton Shores contracted to Muskegon for water, it will make it difficult for the Heights plant to survive.
4. The Heights marked up their water to Fruitport and Norton Shores by 25% and they desperately need that income.

5. It’s in everyone’s interest to help the Heights succeed. Their problems spill over to the neighboring communities whether it is crime, school sports, or this areas visitors’ safety going through the Heights and numerous other ways.

6. It’s utterly irresponsible to purposely damage the Heights like that, and the end result will be that the Muskegon plant will have a monopoly. When our contract runs out, our price will increase to the level their other customers are paying, and we will get what we deserve for failing to consider what is best for the Heights in our decision.

**Cline Road Property Sale**

The township owned 100+ acres on Cline Road. Why did we sell that property at the bottom of the market? Why did we lower our price by $100,000 to do it? It was the largest parcel the township owned and had some of the highest ground.

NOTE:

Government’s job is to protect its citizens. That includes those less able to defend themselves. If we allow our government to do them in, who is next and where? We all have a responsibility to respond and that’s one of the main reasons I am running for township supervisor. — Ron
This subject was sent to the Chronicle by Mr. Stewart on 10/8/12, and to our knowledge, it had not been printed as of 10/23/12.

I have been a resident of this area for almost 70 years except for a few years at U of M Dearborn. I was surprised recently by the possibility of Fruitport and Norton Shores changing their water supply from Muskegon Heights to Muskegon. To me it does not make any sense (there must be politicians involved). I have three reasons why I am against the change:

1. The Heights has been a good supplier for many years (IF IT WORKS DON'T FIX IT). The Heights has plenty of capacity. Both Fruitport and Norton Shores are geographically adjacent to the Heights, therefore, less piping and pumping expense. The Heights built the elevated tank at Getty and Norton primarily to supply Fruitport and Norton Shores. With the change we will have to build a large connecting pipeline and one or two storage tanks (unnecessary taxpayer expense).

2. When the East Sherman shopping area was being developed, Fruitport tired to get the water from Muskegon which was just on the North side of Sherman. However, Muskegon's cost was so high that Fruitport ran a supply pipe for a mile through Norton Shores to connect to the Heights, for a more reasonable rate.

3. I have always thought the Heights water was better tasting. There may be good reasons for this. Muskegon Lake is fed by the Muskegon River, several streams, storm sewers, and all the areas' treated sewage. When this leaves the channel and enters Lake Michigan it forms a brown film. Bosters have noticed this film (fishermen call the edges the "scum line") and it can be seen in overhead photographs. Lake Michigan has a natural South current which takes it to the Muskegon treatment plant, which is about one mile south of the pier. The film dissipates before it reaches the Heights treatment plant, 3/4 mile south of the pier.

I hope the responsible parties will reconsider this serious change.

Ken Stewart
Fruitport Township

NOTE: Mr. Stewart expresses valid concerns in addition to some that I have given on the page 6. The decision to buy water from Muskegon and sever our long-standing relationship with Muskegon Heights (which affects everyone on all our water lines and those on future water lines) should have had a wide-ranging discussion with public input. The pros and cons should have been encouraged in order to fully examine the issue and make the best decision for our township, instead of having been done by backroom politics and then rushed to a board decision. Fruitport and Norton Shores leadership may have made a huge and permanent mistake here. It's a perfect example of amateur leadership and the consequences that our citizens will have to live with forever.

Some accomplishments from Ron's first term in office (1996-2000):

> Facilitated the establishment of the Lakes Mall
> Helped with the establishment of Calvary Christian School
> Facilitated the accumulation of property needed for the Meijers store
> Facilitated the extension of the water and sewer lines needed to build the Mall as well as the future development in that area
> Converted several roads from gravel and sand to asphalt, some of which were the north end of Raffle to Cleveland, and Cleveland from Raffle to Dangl
> Rebuilt Cline Road west of Sheridan
> Bike paths on two sides of the Lakes Mall and other areas
> All this while increasing our fund balance

Select the right candidate this November
Letter to the Editor:

It's your animal loving friend, Christine Lea, here.

I am the "bunny loving lady," founder and operator of Critter Café Rescue on Airline and Mt. Garfield's corner.

I am writing in celebration of our privilege of CHOICE. This November, we have the honor of electing our next township supervisor for Fruitport Charter Township. My wonderful friend, Ron Cooper, is on the township supervisor ballot as a no party affiliation candidate.

He and most of his family are lifelong residents of Fruitport Township. Ron is also one of our elders at Fruitport Congregational Church. He is a respectable, fair and trustworthy guy who has all of our best interests at heart, including that of our beloved pets.

For such a small community as Fruitport, we are fortunate to have such a great wealth of different amenities. In Fruitport Township, indeed, there is something for everyone to enjoy. It's no secret that I am a huge animal lover and advocate. Let me describe some of the ways in which Fruitport Township, with the support of Ron Cooper, benefits me in my mission to help needy animals that find their way to Critter Café Rescue.

I feel so blessed to have a strong relationship with my beloved go-to veterinarian, Dr. Corbett (honors also to her husband, Dr. Kromp). Dr. Corbett hangs her shingle just a short hop, skip and jump away, at the end of Peninsular. It's reassuring that during emergencies I can trust one of the foremost rabbit and small animal vet in the area to be so close.

The West Michigan Spay and Neuter Clinic on Airline offers high quality, low cost spay/neuter/micro-chipping/vaccinations and post-surgical care. To me, this is another priceless asset here in Fruitport, giving critical support to pets and their owners. Did you know Ron Cooper was one of two people instrumental in getting the clinic up and running to stop pet over-population in west Michigan? More than 4,000 (and counting) cat and dog spay/neuters have been safely accomplished.

My many years of being an animal lover have connected me with myriad personalities and minds. I have listened to and been fascinated by historical figures whose quotes, amusingly, speak to the human (and animal!) condition as it stands today. The words of the wise seem to endure our changing times to stay relevant. One, my favorite, comes to my mind thinking over all that Ron Cooper has to offer our community now and in the future — "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." — Mahatma Gandhi

Ron has put forth monumental effort in improving West Michigan. The Spay and Neuter Clinic has bettered the lives of thousands of West Michigan companion animals. He continues to embrace animal rescue such as Critter Café, and helps in any way he can to enable me and other volunteers to do some of the heartbreaking and physically tedious work that goes into animal rescue.

To me, that really says a lot about Ron Cooper.

Ron Cooper's work has given Critter Café and other animal rescues the safe space to, among other popular pursuits, "live and let live," and "don't sweat the small stuff." His faithful support has even allowed animal rescuers to live this vision: "There is nothing that wastes the body like worry, and one who has any faith in God should be ashamed to worry about anything whatsoever." — Mahatma Gandhi

When one cares so deeply about the hardworking people in his community as Ron Cooper does, and he is genuine in that care, a community as a whole is greater. Ron Cooper is truly a great leader.

Fruitport's current supervisor lacks the vision, empathy and greatness within himself to deserve a re-vote into our very abundant governmental heart. Where do we, as a community, want to go?

Saddly, too, our current supervisor lacks the stewardship, knowledge and reverence to respect many of the old-fashioned Good Samaritan folk like me. I am following my mission, which is to simply educate and reach out to as many of the voiceless fur and feather babies in need as I can within my lifetime. Under the current supervisor, I have been persecuted for such works, which do harm to none.

I ask you to take a critical look at the promise — not kept, but made — of our current township supervisor upon his being sworn in: The promise of positive, experienced and proven leadership. Positively, I certainly cannot prove, considering my encounters with him. I wonder also where he got his superviory experience — certainly, he can't be citing his prior employment as a clerk?

He is not Fruitport's best bet for the future, as the past four years have truly proven. Please, let's go back to what worked and vote Ron Cooper back in! With Ron at our head, we can live our lives and take pleasure in addressing other important township issues, like enjoying and improving the venue!

I'll leave you with another quote, this time by philosopher Immanuel Kant: "We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals." Ron Cooper's heart truly is so good.

Sincerely,
Christine Lea
Critter Café Rescue
5818 Airline Road
## Invoice

**The Pioneer Group**

115 N. Michigan  
Big Rapids MI 49307

- (231) 796-4831  
- (231) 796-1152

**Ron Cooper**  
~ FRUITPORT AREA NEWS  
420 N. 3RD AVE  
FRUITPORT, MI 49415

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Total 5m 8 pages  

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Amount of Deposit: $1,301.17
New Balance: $1,301.17
Confirmation #: 20120611472450D

Total: $1,301.17

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SN 7530-07-K000-8209 This form and mailing standards available on Postal Explorer at pe.usps.com.
Thanksgiving Meals for 192 Families
Snapshots of Another Genuine Community Effort

F.A.C.E. distributes Thanksgiving meals
By Pat Linnell, President, Sue Johnson
Families and Community Engage (F.A.C.E.) and the Fruitport Lions Club combined forces once again this year to provide 192 Thanksgiving meals complete with turkeys for area families less fortunate than ourselves.

Families, the community, the Fruitport Lions Club, business owners, teachers and students from our community schools and F.A.C.E. organizers gathered together on Sunday, November 18 at what was once the Fruitport Auditorium to help put the Thanksgiving boxes together and ready them for delivery on Sunday and Monday.

The food donation effort began about two weeks ago with a massive canned goods drive at Fruitport Community Schools. Chairman Bryan Gemmel, F.A.C.E. organizers, the Fruitport Lions and the caring people from the community worked handing out flyers at Fruitport Orchard Market collecting turkeys and canned goods to provide much of what was needed. Raffle was held at Ye Old Tavern with items donated by members of the community. The Grand Haven Eagles gave a generous donation, and cash donations were collected from the donation boxes at area businesses to complete the Thanksgiving boxes.

Area businesses also have given generously to the F.A.C.E./Fruitport Lions cause, including the Fruitport Auditorium’s new owner, Jerry Lundberg, who donated his facility for the Thanksgiving and Christmas programs.

Among those helping with the Thanksgiving program have been Fruitport Orchard Market, Ye Old Tavern, Hazelkamp Meats, Pin Crest Lanes, Fruitport Chiropractic Center and their staff, Castings Technology, Fruitport Stone and Lock, Peppin Pizza, Susie’s Village Inn, McDonald’s, Burger Chef, the Meatblock, Janie’s Barber Shop, Mr. Quick in Cloverville, Cozy Corner Café, RV Tree Service, the Fruitport Lions Club, F.A.C.E., Fruitport schools and the children and families of Fruitport.

F.A.C.E. Chairman Bryan Gemmel, F.A.C.E. Organizers, The Fruitport Lions Club and Past District Governor of the Fruitport Lions Club Mike Johnson would like to thank the community and businesses who gave so generously this Thanksgiving season. Without your help and support it would not have been possible for the 192 families in our community to have a happy and blessed Thanksgiving.

Tentative Newspaper Delivery Schedule
February 9, 2013
Presidents’ / Valentine’s Day Issue
(Deadline January 27, 2013)
Thank you from Ron Cooper

to all who helped me run for Fruitport Township Supervisor. Not having to devote my primary attention to the operation of the township for the next four years is fine with me. What does concern me is that the problems that I offered to correct still exist.

If you're concerned, get involved by attending board meetings, asking questions, and participating as best you can. We are all going to pay for poor government decisions.

Causway park concern

Letter to the Editor:

Four people from Muskegon County have died from their injuries in the war, and the war is now officially over, yet there are no plans for a fitting monument to their service at the Causway Veterans Memorial Park. One of these fallen heroes is Corporal J. T. Lee of Fruitport Township. Soon after his demise in the war, the people of Fruitport Township got together and added his name to our granite monument honoring those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. We did not even wait for the war to end to add his name to our monument. It was the right thing to do and the people of Fruitport Township got it done, ASAP.

There are individual stones in the Muskegon County Causway Veterans Memorial Park honoring hundreds of Muskegon County men who died in service in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Those individuals who died in World War I are listed by name in bronze at the south end of the park, the Korean War and the Vietnam War are listed by name in stone at the north end of the park, and those individuals from the Vietnam War are listed by name on a stone on the island in the park.

No stone was put up for the four who died from Muskegon County from the war. Why the war is over, and it is time to say, but the self-appointed Muskegon County Memorial Park Committee and the Muskegon VPW are doing nothing to honor the four who died for our great Republic who deserve to be honored with their names engraved on stone at the Causway Veterans Park.

Another note, the LST has a new granite memorial honoring Muskegon County's two men who were awarded our nation's Medal of Honor and a VPW member who did so much to see that veterans of Muskegon County received a military funeral. As Gov. John Engler, who dedicated his life to serving our nation, veterans received a military funeral. The granite memorial was erected by the LST, which was donated by the VPW, was soundly rejected for placement at the Causway park by the self-appointed committee, perhaps because they felt it should be considered as custodians of the Muskegon County Veterans Memorial Park, as they have the right attitude towards all veterans.

Letter to the Editor

This subject was sent to the Chronicle by Mr. Stewart on 10/8/12, and to our knowledge, it had not been printed as of 10/23/12. He sent it to FAN at that time.

I have been a resident of this area for almost 70 years except for a few years at U of M Dearborn. I was surprised recently by the possibility of Fruitport and Norton Shores changing their water supply from Muskegon Heights to Muskegon. To me it does not make any sense (there must be politicians involved). I have three reasons why I am against the change:

1. The Heights has been a good supplier for many years (IF IT WORKS DON'T FIX IT). The Heights has plenty of capacity. Both Fruitport and Norton Shores are geographically adjacent to the Heights, therefore, less piping and pumping expense. The Heights built the elevated tank at Goby and Norton primarily to supply Fruitport and Norton Shores. With the change we will have to build a large connecting pipeline and one or two storage tanks.

2. When the East Shore shopping area was being developed, Fruitport tired to get the water from Muskegon Heights which was just on the north side of Shoreline. However, Muskegon's cost was so high that Fruitport ran a supply pipe for a mile through Norton Shores to connect to the Heights, for a more reasonable rate.

3. I have always thought the Heights water was better tasting. There may be good reasons for this. Muskegon Lake is fed by the Muskegon River, several streams, standpipes, and all the areas "treated" sewage. When this leaves the channel and enters Lake Michigan it forms a brown film. Boaters have noticed this film (fishermen call the edges "tartaline") that it can be seen in overhead photographs. Lake Michigan has a natural South current which takes it to the Muskegon treatment plant, which is about one mile south of the pier. The film dissipates before it reaches the Heights treatment plant, 3/14 miles south of the pier.

I hope the responsible parties will reconsider this change.

Ken Stewart
Fruitport Township

Water Agreement

Note from the Editor regarding the new water agreement. Ken Stewart expresses valid concerns in addition to some I have.

1. Even with the Heights occasionally intermitting the water plant funds with their general fund, Fruitport and Norton Shores have paid less for water than Muskegon water plant customers for nearly all of 40 years.

2. With Fruitport and Norton Shores contracting to Fruitport for water, it will make it difficult for the Heights water plant to survive.

3. The Heights marked up their water to Fruitport and Norton Shores by 25 percent and they desperately need that income.

4. It's in everyone's interest to help the Heights succeed. Their problems spill over to the heights through their responsibilities whether it is crime, school sports, police backup, or this area's Visitors' safety driving through the Heights.

5. The end result will be that the Muskegon plant will have a monopoly. When our contract runs out, our price will increase to the level of the other customers are paying.

In the meantime, I believe that if all expenses are considered, we will pay more for Muskegon water from day one.

If the Fruitport Board would ask the Heights if they would set up a separate checking account for the water plant and agree to all the necessary committees a little more participation in the water plant decision-making progress, I think there's a good chance they'll agree. It's well worth the effort, if they agree we will continue with the best water at the lowest price.

Graham snackers

By Judy Board

24 gram cracker squares
1 cup packed butter
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 cup chopped nuts
Line a pan with crackers. Combine butter and sugar. Spoon over crackers. Sprinkle with walnuts. Bake at 350° for 10 or 12 minutes.

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NEW HOURS

For Copies & More and FAN
11:00 am - 3:00 pm
M - F

Sorry for any inconvenience.

Questions, call 865-6370

Grand Valley State University

Dean's List

(Submitted by Grand Valley State University)

Winter 2012 semester dean's list students from our area are: John Blystone, LaCinda Cyndy, Aimee Delhuntey, Hillary A. Berry, Kristian T. Brinkhøj, Megan L. Foster, Rachel L. Robinson, Tyler J. Slayker and Benjamin M. Wolsley.


Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber

Awarded Chamber of the Year

(Submitted by the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce)

The Michigan Association of Chamber Professionals (MACP) recognized the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce with the 2012 Outstanding Chamber of Commerce award in the large chamber category at the MACP Leadership Conference and annual meeting on October 15, 2012.

This is the third time in six years the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber has been recognized for excellence in organizational leadership.

The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce received this award based on its accomplishments in leadership and governance, financial stewardship, business advocacy and member programming.

Bob Thomas, director for the Michigan Association of Chamber Professionals, "Among the chamber's noted advancements were its leadership in state and local policy issues, targeted communications strategy and its ability to manage financial and human resources to maximize return on its investment."

Synthetic Drugs

Letter to the Editor:

There is a huge risk in the use of synthetic drugs such as bath salts, that any kid could buy over the counter. These dangerous and lethal drugs should not be sold at all. I am sure you have heard of the man who bit off half of a woman's ear. These legal drugs are just as dangerous to synthetic drugs such as bath salts. People have been known to take these drugs and then commit suicide or murder others.

Our government needs to step in as soon as possible and do something about this nightmare that is plaguing our children, family and friends.

We have to be aware of what synthetic drugs do to the users so that no one else can get hurt.

Let alone the fact that there is a large quantity flooding our streets. We need to get the message out to our children, family and friends that there are not countless over-the-counter novelty items. They are extremely dangerous and deadly chemicals not to be taken lightly. Bath salts, with designer names such as "Purple Wave," "Valium Sky," and "Blue Venom," are being sold by many other names on the street, have caused many thousands of people to call the Poison Control Center for help within the last year. There is really no way to know if someone has used any of these drugs, get the face to the drug if you are unsure what it is.

We have to be aware of what these drugs do to the users so that no one else can get hurt.
Print mail 32 page page 85.59 per page

\[ \frac{1}{96''} = .90 \text{ per inch} \]

\[ 25 \times 6'' = 150 \]
Hire (Vote for) Ron Cooper for Fruitport Township Supervisor

Resumé


West Michigan Spay and Neuter Clinic 1993-2008 to Present Co-founder and president. Non-paid. Purpose is to provide low-cost spay and neuter services to help prevent over-population of pets and reduce the thousands that are killed each year because there are not enough people who want them. We will soon do our 500th spay/neuter.

Fruitport Area News Inc 1983-present Founder, publisher, editor, in our 30th year as a community service newspaper, non-paid.

Copies & More Inc 1993-present Founder and President. My wife, Mariana, is the manager.

Farmer 1957-present at one time produced, an in this area, combines corn for the present, do/ Thanks a

Fruitport Lions Club Member 1957-2012 55th year, former president, board member, Old Fashioned Days board, Lion of the Year, Melvin Jones Fellow twice, Distinguished Service Award, Co-Chair of Lions Basketball construction project and raised all the funds

Cooper Lawns Inc, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 1959-1994 Founder, CEO. Sold in 1994 to a national company. We manufactured lawn fertilizer and provided weed control and feeding service to the greater Milwaukee area. For years we were the largest business of that type in greater Milwaukee.

Project Pride Award Honored by Muskegon Chamber of Commerce

Professional Farmers of America Represented Michigan farmers in Washington, D.C. during the Carter administration.

Elected to represent Muskegon County farmers at various times to our regional agricultural district.

First Congregational Church of Fruitport 1984-present Member, Elder, and Sunday School Superintendent for many years and at the present time

Married to Mariann. We have six kids, foster kids, exchange students, 17+ grandkids, 8 great-grandkids. Both of us were born and raised in the Fruitport area.

Thank you for your support. If you are willing to have a sign in your yard, please call 865-3135 and a sign will be delivered to your address. If you have questions about this or any other information, please call 865-3135. Thank you in advance for your help and consideration. Please vote in the November 6th election. Together we can make a difference.

Vote for Proven Leadership & Results

There were many accomplishments during his last term (2004 - 2008):

- Converted 5 roads from gravel to asphalt
- Added 11 extensions to our water trunk lines
- Started a soccer park on Sherington Rd.
- Extended bike paths
- Added to the cemetery building
- Renovating the bathrooms at FARR Field
- Added two practice fields at east side of FARR Field
- Built police headquarters ($300,000) onto fire station on Airline
- Focused Lights on Water Tower
- Inherited a $500,000 budget deficit and balanced.
- Left office with a total Fund Balance of $1,183,738

- Added 11 needed extensions to our water trunk lines

There were several improvements that were completed that are part of our master plan for water distribution. We were successful in connecting some very important areas that had been ignored for 30 years. A huge contribution to the cost of these improvements and extensions was from grants and contributions from businesses on these lines (over $600,000). This has added to the capacity and increased the capacity needed for large areas in our township’s water system.

- Eastbound OFF ramps at I-96 and Sternberg Rd. This was a high priority project from my first week in office. We went through close to a thousand hearings and received a recommendation from MDOT (Michigan Department of Transportation). The project was sent to the Federal DOT (Department of Transportation) for final approval. Over 2 million dollars ($2,000,000) in grant money was set aside for this project at the Federal level and more was pledged locally.

- Land for Soccer Park

With more than 600 Fruitport Township youth in soccer (more than all the other sports combined), I feel that there is a need for a park dedicated to youth soccer. When I ran for office in 2004, I set as a personal goal to add more soccer fields to our parks system. After taking office, we had meetings with the soccer parents' group and encouraged them to participate and help identify the best location of land that matched the township-owned. Forty (40) acres of township property on Porter Road was chosen. Opposition developed against using the land for that purpose, and with the help of some very key people, a 3-way land swap was made with the township, the conservation district, and the school system. The township now has ownership of 20 acres on Sherington Road for our soccer park.

- Bike Paths

We built miles of bike paths and lanes during both terms, all within our budget. I believe bike paths are important to the health and welfare of our community and much more can be done. When I left office we had about 1/2 of the money needed pledged to connect the Muskegawa bike path on the north to the Spring Lake bike path on the south. It looks like the current administration has abandoned the project. Some of the money pledged has now been used for an Ottawa County bike path.
IMPORTANT VOTER INFORMATION IN RESPONSE TO BRIAN’S ADVERTISED “FACTS TO CONSIDER”

Brian Werschem’s FACTS TO CONSIDER

Supervisor Brian Werschem inherited a four-year general fund deficit of nearly $1,000,000 dollars and a revolving fund with an $95,000 dollar deficit. The general fund’s “savings account” was so low; the Township borrowed money just to pay its bills until property taxes were collected. This is a fact that can be verified at: http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1751_31038--,00.html

Ron Cooper’s Response to Brian’s Facts!

It would be enlightening for people to go to the web that Brian suggests. You will not find the $1,000,000 and $95,000 amounts because they seem to be made-up figures. You will find that when I left office after the March 2008 audit, Fruitport township’s total fund balance was $1,183,738. This figure speaks for itself as an indicator of the financial health of the township at that time.

If we borrowed for a short term cash flow need, it would be so we would not have to cash in a higher paying interest CD for a short amount of time.

Roads: We also worked with the road commission to rebuild roads at no cost to our township residents: Pontaluna, between Airline and Harvey, Brooks between Hts. Ravenna and Sternberg, and others. It’s standard practice and simple to do. We also, on our own, got over two million dollars earmarked toward on and off ramps on I-96 at Sternberg in Congress by Rep. Hockstra. We held numerous meetings with Michigan Department of Transportation to get it approved by them, which they did. It was sent to Washington and Brian let it go unused??

Brian seems to think that if you live on a dirty, dusty, pot-holed, and wash-board gravel road, that it’s not the township’s concern. I believe it’s a health and safety issue and the township should be helpful. During my last term we converted 5 such roads.

Roads

Since taking office, Brian worked with the Road Commission to obtain grants for road improvements rather than using your tax dollars. He appointed a representative to the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission which distributes Federal road funds throughout North Ottawa and Muskegon Counties. This secured nearly $1,000,000 in funding to completely reconstruct Hile Road (from Airline to Sheridan) and Sheridan (from Heights Ravenna to Hile) at no cost to the Fruitport Township residents, in 2013 and 2014. Brian feels it’s smarter to maintain existing roads with preventative maintenance and resurfacing (Airline, Dangl, Mill Iron, and Brooks) rather than using tax dollars for expansions.

Bike Paths

The new bike paths represent a cost to the Fruitport tax payer and a future liability and only benefit the Commercial areas around the Lakes Mall. Bike paths are an important non-motorized transportation mode; Brian continues with the state to connect the north and south bike paths, using Federal and State money at no cost to the Fruitport taxpayer.

Parks

Brian secured $465,000 in grants to construct the new Sheringer soccer park.

Public Utilities

Rather than spend millions of dollars on water and sewer extensions in rural areas where people do not want or request it, Brian focused efforts on maintaining and repairing the existing infrastructure. Spending water and sewer customer money on expanding the utility systems to rural areas is not fair to the existing customers, exacerbates the potential for urban sprawl, and creates a future liability with very few new connections to offset the costs.

Parks: The Sheringer soccer park land was purchased by trading other land during my administration. The grant Brian claims he secured was done by the Parks Commission and a paid professional grant writer.

Public Utilities: Evidently Brian’s challenge has been to maintain and repair our existing infrastructure. Big deal! Most of our system is less than 50 years old and doesn’t require much to maintain. During my term in office, we maintained and also added 11 extensions to our trunk lines, most were needed to complete the looping in our master plan, and to remedy the areas of line water. Previously the water department had to frequently run water into
ditches to keep it fresh and safe to drink. Most of those problems were solved with the looping that we did connecting the dead end lines, and it also gave people on those lines the ability to hook up to fresh water. We did it within our budget and no one was forced to hook up if they didn’t want to at the time the line went through. Most of the looping that was done will be needed if the water tower is built at Broadway and Brooks Roads.

**Public Utilities - Sewer:** I extended sewer lines sized for the entire south half of the township which includes the Mall, Calvary Christian Schools, and the Village. We also put in a sewer line that was not needed at that time, down Sternberg Road from Quarterline to I-96 during the rebuilding of Sternberg Road because it was the least expensive to do at that time. It’s now being used and our sewer rates are still the lowest.

**Zoning Enforcement:** Actually, I believe Brian has gone beyond the law and used the zoning ordinances and assessing department to abuse certain township citizens. It’s one of the reasons that I’m running for Supervisor. Government’s job is to protect its citizens, including the most defenseless, not do them in as has been happening.

**Lawsuits:** The race track lawsuit was not costing the township any money because I personally accepted responsibility for the township’s legal expenses and have been making monthly payments for over four years. I agreed to do that because I felt confident that the township would get a settlement of over $700,000 and did not want to see the township citizens lose that money because of political motivation. Brian convinced our board to settle it for $10,000 and put the money in the General Fund.

Brian and the township joined Norton Shores to proceed with a lawsuit against Muskegon Heights that, indeed proved to be, in his words ‘a frivolous lawsuit’. Reading the contract with the Heights, would make you wonder how the judge would rule in the township’s favor, and the judge ruled against it.

**Summary:** It could take pages to refute the false and misleading statements made in Brian’s summary. It’s doubtful that the 25% figure is correct. The 2008 and 2012 audits don’t support this statement. It’s also doubtful that employee costs are less today than four years ago, OR getting out of the existing water supply contract has stabilized the general fund. His facts are disputable and are not verified through the township’s records. Check the website that Brian has offered. It holds the township annual reports and see if you can find his statements true.

We need to go back to compassionate local government – we were not spending beyond our means, but using our resources to benefit the health, safety, and quality of life of our residents.
**Promises made by Brian during his 2008 campaign for supervisor**

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<td>He said he would improve our roads</td>
<td>Changed no roads from gravel to asphalt</td>
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<td>Within a month of being elected, Brian informed the</td>
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<td>residents on roads built in the late 1940s and 1950s</td>
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<td>that had never been accepted by the county that they</td>
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<td>would have to maintain their own roads. The roads were</td>
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<td>maintained during both of Ron's terms in office and also</td>
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<td>during other supervisors' terms. These citizens pay</td>
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<td>property taxes and gas taxes, but because their homes</td>
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<td>were built at a time that our government failed to take</td>
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<td>care of the details of construction and ownership, Brian</td>
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<td>decided it would be a nice way to save some money.</td>
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<td>He may have participated with the county road</td>
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<td>commission with some chip and seal resurfacing and other</td>
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<td>road commission projects.</td>
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<td>Improve bike lanes and bike paths</td>
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<td>He said our core services of water need to</td>
<td>Added no water extension to trunk lines</td>
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<td>be supported</td>
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**New DPW Building**

The DPW has wanted a new building for years. It has been a little light but they have been getting by. Brian evidently decided that it was time to build them a new building. Its a half million-dollar building - the most expensive building the township has built for itself. And where did Brian decide to build it? On ten acres of property on the corner of Brooks Road and Broadway that was supposedly bought for a location for a water tower which was in our 50-year-old water distribution design. Whether it is still relevant is open for discussion. That location is about as far from the township hall as you can get. There is no water line in either direction about 1/2 mile on Brooks and over a mile on Broadway. Both of those pipes would need to be put in before building a water tower. A well has been put in so that there is water for the building. I always thought that Fruitport Township government worked really well with the water department and government offices together. They could help each other with phones and customer service, and it was healthy having them within sight. I expect that another person will need to be hired to accommodate the separate offices. Also, the building is about as far from our water and sewer customers as you can get which means extra driving time during the day, every day, just to get to the customers who need services, especially emergency shut-offs in case of accidents or line breakage. It seems to me that that money could have been better spent getting water lines to people who have to deal with bad water and expensive purifying systems. Since the building was built next to the old dump, they may not be able to drink water from their own well.

**Stop wasting money on frivolous lawsuits**

- Started a lawsuit with Muskegon Heights over a water rate issue that clearly contradicted the water services agreement and lost.

- Agreed to a settlement of $10,000 by the race track for not paying close to a million dollars in fees owed to the township. Brian settled it with very little knowledge of the success the township had in court. I rather doubt that he read even 1/4 of the court documents. The settlement was a huge loss to the township.
What did Ron do during the previous term in office?

5
• Converted 5 roads from gravel to asphalt
  • Maintained the dozen or so old roads which the county wouldn’t accept.

Participated with the county road commission to do chip and seal to resurface many miles of roads and other road commission projects.

Wash-board gravel roads can be very dangerous, especially for young and inexperienced drivers. The vehicle can easily vibrate off the road. We have had citizens die and also become permanently disabled from these kinds of accidents. Our township leadership needs to be aware and carry a burden for the importance of converting gravel roads to asphalt.

6 & 2
• During his two terms he established 6 Bike Paths and 2 Bike Lanes
• He also purchased the equipment to maintain the bike paths during the winter, including the sidewalk near Beach School.

1. The bike path on two sides of the Mill frontage.
2. The bike path on Henry in front of Mejers
3. The bike path on Sheridan between Mr. Garfield & Sternberg
4. The bike path along Mt. Garfield both sides of Shidler
5. Worked with the county to establish the bike path from the Fruitport Village to the Spring Lake bike path
6. The bike lanes, both sides of Portland between the middle school & Harvey
7. Bike path on Independence Drive, Harvey to Mejers

11
• Added 11 extensions to our water trunk lines
• Most of these extensions were important looping in the master plan that had been left unfinished for 30+ years.

1. Heights Ravenna Road east to Brooks Road
2. Brooks Road from Trail Side to Hazekamps
3. Broadway Avenue east to bike path (Muskegwa Trail)
4. Dangl Road between Airlane and Sternberg
5. Sternberg Road from Dangl to Brooks Road
6. Stricker Road from Mt. Garfield to Sternberg
7. Brooks Road from Sternberg to Ellis Road
8. Ellis Road east to Brooks Road
9. Harvey Street, Wilson to Jodson
10. Brooks Road – connected water mains north and south of Norris Creek
11. Wilson Road – connection line, Harvey Street to Norton Shores

• With Norton Shores negotiated through the courts an agreement to have Muskegon Heights return over $200,000 that they had intermingled with their general fund from the water fund.

• Since the water service agreement was negotiated during Ron’s first term, with his direct involvement, Fruitport and Norton Shores have had lower wholesale water cost than either Muskegon or Grand Haven customers pay.

• After a thorough examination and studying the agreement with the race track, I knew they were sending the Fruitport Township share of the betting formula away from Fruitport. They didn’t expect us to know what they were doing. It was in their best interest to work behind the scenes to make sure I wasn’t reelected. The new board would not familiarize themselves with the case. There was a lot at stake for track ownership. Ron initiated the suit against the race track for not paying about a million dollars in betting fees to the township using funds from the track designed for that purpose, not from the general fund. One of the track attorneys, Nelson Westin, had acknowledged that the track would probably settle for between $700,000 and $800,000 when they could no longer stall the case through the courts and if the township board stayed committed. The national ownership agreed in court to pay for the state ownership’s obligation when that time came.

Ron agreed to be responsible for the township’s attorney bill personally from that time on because he could not bear to see the township lose that much money because of petty politics by the township board, and with the understanding he would be reimbursed for his expenses when the settlement took place. He is still making monthly payments on that bill. The track owners were having difficulty stalling it any longer and were at a point where they would be getting the judge’s decision if they didn’t settle it. The settlement took place without Ron’s knowledge and for a ridiculously small amount of $10,000. Since the township settled for such a small amount, Brian recommended to just put the settlement into the general fund.

NOTE:
ABSENTEE BALLOT VOTERS CAN CHANGE THEIR VOTE BY GOING TO FRUITPORT TOWNSHIP OFFICE AND ASKING.
Is this what Brian calls “Positive Leadership”?

Bending the law and even making up laws to do people in (and to show them who is boss) following are some examples:

**Critter Café**
**Airline Rd., Fruitport**

Christine’s Critter Café, located across the road from the fire station on Airline Road, Christine puts her heart and soul into rescuing abandoned pets and finding new homes for them. She averages about 200 pets per month. Here is the only rescue in our area that takes in all pets including rabbits, rats, birds, etc. Before moving into her location, she requested a letter of permission from the township which she received May 1, 2008. Police departments, including the Fruitport police department, 911, and other rescuers that take only dogs and cats sent her abandoned pets.

After four years operating her rescue, Brian initiated a letter sent by Michigan Township Services that told her that all her “animals must be removed from the property until all necessary approvals granted by the Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Appeals.” Brian’s actions could be because Christine complained to authorities that an animal the police asked her to pick up had been abused. There was a connection between Brian and the possible abuser.

After receiving the letter and mailing it to some of her fellow rescuers for their opinion on what she should do, she called Township Services and they told her she needed to go to Brian’s office and talk to him, which she did.

According to Christine and others who were nearby, Brian yelled that 5,000 people had responded to him on the internet and proceeded to verbally and aggressively (in an intentionally threatening manner) abuse her to the point where she broke down in tears, and he continued.

On Channel 8 news he said he had no knowledge of the Critter Café existing, Brian put an ad in the December 2008 fruitportian under “Animal” and next to it (about 1/2), is an article about the Critter Café Rescue with a picture of her sign, and Brian seems to be looking right at it. Usually, when someone puts an ad in the paper with their picture in it, they put it out on the internet as well. Normally, the above and police department street faces her sign and Brian probably used that drive about once a week.

Christine seems to be a pleasant and open person who might not be able to defend herself. Fortunately, the public came forward and offered to do what they could to help her. Christine spends her limited retirement on her rescue and has no funds left over. One person who stood forward was an attorney, Ginni Milks, from Rockford who started a conversation with the township attorney, and Christine has been in limbo ever since, not knowing from day to day what is going to happen to her and her rescue, she can’t leave the office. Additionally, the fire and police department street faces her sign and Brian probably uses that drive about once a week.

She knows that the Department of Agriculture, the DNR, Animal Control, and Pound Buddies had been contacted by the township because they had contacted her.

Recently she was in the hospital for a few days because she was injured by a cat that was dropped off at her rescue by an unknown person. Even though volunteers looked after the rescue while she was in the hospital, it was a worry to her of what the township might do to her rescue while she was gone.

**Mark Diederich**
**2636 E. Pontaluna Rd., Fruitport**

Mark and his dad before him, have been taking in yard compostibles since the 1940s. When I was in office a couple neighbors complained that his place was not neat enough to suit them. Mark also lives in a 100-year-old house that his grandfather built. I checked out the legality with what Mark was doing and came to the conclusion that he was agriculture and pre-existing any of our zoning ordinances, and under the law he should be able to continue.

In 1995, Fred Constantine from Michigan Township Services, wrote Mark that the township has no problem with the composting from behind his house and acknowledged that an unlicensed van was a farm vehicle.

One of the neighbors told me at that time to get rid of Mark. When I told him that he was within the law I was told to get rid of him according to the government can do it! At that point I realized that our township government should be protecting Mark, not doing him in. With that background, I’m assuming that the same neighbor told Brian the same thing because in early 2011, Fruitport Township got an order to enter Mark’s home and started the process to condemn and demolish it. It’s my opinion that the judge who issued the order to enter Mark’s home and all other buildings on his property was not fully informed of Mark’s situation. Yellow tape was put across his driveway thus putting him out of business and it has never been taken down by the township.

Brian again had to deal with angry protestors supporting Mark and gave him more time to do some of the improvements inside of his house that the township demanded of him. The township hired a building inspector from Renton Shores and he called him a “Hearing Officer” to make a determination. He basically told Mark’s 100-year-old house up to modern code. I believe this was an abuse of power by Brian who had to get someone else to make up to do the dirty deed because our local inspectors fully understood and were probably not anxious to participate.

Mark is a pleasant man whom one would assume would be able to defend himself. Thankfully, the public became involved to help him.

**Using the Assessor to Spy**

I have been aware that the township, under Brian’s direction, is using the township assessor to spy on our citizens’ property because the township zoning and building department can’t trespass without a warrant.

On Wilson Road, the township assessor entered private property and took pictures of what was a legal operation that could not be seen from any other property and gave the pictures to the township assessor.

At the same time, the assessor took pictures of some cars on neighboring property that no one could see except from the property she was standing on, and turned them over to the township. I have first-hand knowledge of this. I was told by a very reliable source that the assessor also went into a fenced-in area behind a garage that had an unlicensed car that no one could see from the street. The unlicensed car may have been a part of an auto repair shop at the garage or the street. Whether or not the car was there legally is not the question. I believe it is against the law to use the township assessor in this way.

**The New Water Agreement**

I don’t believe it’s a good decision to stop buying water from the Muskegon Heights water plant.

1. Fruitport and Norton Shores have paid less for water than Muskegon water plant customers for nearly all of 40 years.
2. It’s been healthy for Muskegon water plant customers because Muskegon was limited on how much more they could charge their customers over what the Heights charged.
3. With Fruitport and Norton Shores contract-ed to Muskegon for water, it will make it difficult for the Heights plant to survive.
4. The Heights marked up their water to Fruitport and Norton Shores by 25% and they desperately need that income.
5. It’s in everyone’s interest to help the Heights succeed. Their problems spill over to the neighboring communities whether it is crime, school sports, or this area visitors’ safety going through the Heights and numer-ous other ways.

6. It’s utterly irresponsible to purposely dam-age the Heights like that, and the end result will be that the Muskegon plant will have a monoply. When our contract runs out, our price will increase to the level other customers are paying, and we will get what we deserve for failing to consider what is best for the Heights in our decision.

**Misleading Advertising**

Brian states in his advertising that he “Eliminated over three million dollars in debt at no additional cost to the taxpayers.” More simply, he paid the water and sewer bonds with money that was in those funds and actually he didn’t do it, but the treasurer did.

He says he eliminated “over $500,000 in interest payments on behalf of the taxpayers.” Most costs have gone down without Brian’s help and the township treasurer/board has simply taken advantage of the lower rates.

“Reduced operational costs by $587,000 (25.1%) while improving services.” At the moment I don’t have the figures to check his figures. Which services have improved?

Not funding the public/private roads that have been maintained by the township for years?

Doing one unadvertised cleanup in the spring and eliminating the fall cleanup?

Having so few poor police investigation that people are starting to not call the police after a robbery because it isn’t worth the bother?

“Saved them a lot of money by paying bills.” I would like to show him where the township borrowed to pay the bills unless it is to keep from cashing in high paying CDs for a short term need.

**Cline Road Property Sale**

The township owned 100+ acres on Cline Road. Why did we sell that property at the bottom of the market? Why did we lower our price by $100,000 to do it? It was the largest piece of the township owned and also had some of the highest ground.

**NOTE:** Government’s job is to protect its citizens. That includes those less able to defend themselves. If we allow our government to do them in, who is next and what does it stop? We all have a responsibility to respond and that’s one of the main reasons I am running for township supervisor. – Ron

Some of what is printed here is from memory and I believe it is accurate, but there is the possibility that I may be off a little on something. If you have any questions, please give me a call at 865-3135 and I will do my best to respond.
This subject was sent to the Chronicle by Mr. Stewart on 10/8/12, and to our knowledge, it had not been printed as of 10/23/12.

I have been a resident of this area for almost 70 years except for a few years at U of M Dearborn. I was surprised by the possibility of Fruitport and Norton Shores changing their water supply from Muskegon Heights to Muskegon. To me it does not make any sense (there must be politicians involved). I have three reasons why I am against the change:

1. The Heights has been a good supplier for many years (IF IT WORKS DON'T FIX IT). The Heights has plenty of capacity. Both Fruitport and Norton Shores are geographically adjacent to the Heights, therefore, less piping and pumping expense. The Heights built the elevated tank at Getty and Norton primarily to supply Fruitport and Norton Shores. With the change we will have to build a large connecting pipeline and one or two storage tanks (unnecessary taxpayer expense).

2. When the East Sherman shopping area was being developed, Fruitport tried to get the water from Muskegon which was just on the North side of Sherman. However, Muskegon’s cost was so high that Fruitport ran a supply pipe for a mile through Norton Shores to connect to the Heights, for a more reasonable rate.

3. I have always thought the Heights water was better tasting. There may be good reasons for this. Muskegon Lake is fed by the Muskegon River, several streams, storm sewers, and all the areas’ treated sewage. When this leaves the channel and enters Lake Michigan it forms a brown film. Boaters have noticed this film (fishermen call the edges “the scum line”) and it can be seen in overhead photographs. Lake Michigan has a natural South current which takes it to the Muskegon treatment plant, which is about one mile south of the pier. The film dissipates before it reaches the Heights treatment plant, 3 1/4 miles south of the pier.

I hope the responsible parties will reconsider this serious change.

Ken Stewart
Fruitport Township

NOTE: Mr. Stewart expresses valid concerns in addition to some that I have given on the page 6. The decision to buy water from Muskegon and sever our long-standing relationship with Muskegon Heights (which affects everyone on all our water lines and those on future water lines) should have had a wide-ranging discussion with public input. The pros and cons should have been encouraged in order to fully examine the issue and make the best decision for our township, instead of having been done by backroom politics and then rushed to a board decision. Fruitport and Norton Shores leadership may have made a huge and permanent mistake here. It’s a perfect example of amateur leadership and the consequences that our citizens will have to live with forever.

Some accomplishments from Ron’s first term in office
(1996-2000):

> Facilitated the establishment of the Lakes Mall
> Helped with the establishment of Calvary Christian School
> Facilitated the accumulation of property needed for the Heights store
> Facilitated the extension of the water and sewer lines needed to build the Mall as well as the future development in that area
> Converted several roads from gravel and sand to asphalt, some of which were the north end of Raffie to Cleveland, and Cleveland from Raffie to Dangl
> Rebuilt Cline Road west of Sheridan
> Bike paths on two sides of the Lakes Mall and other areas
> All this while increasing our fund balance
## Complimentary Voting Worksheet for Pontiac Precinct 2

### Officials

**Office:** 
- **Supervisor:** Robert Johnson
- **Register of Deeds:** Dee Moore
- **Director of Agriculture:** James Smith

### Voting Precincts

**Precinct:** 
- **First:** Mitchell
- **Second:** Ford

### Registered Voters

- **Total Voters:** 2,000

### Absentee Ballots

- **Total Absentee Ballots:** 500

### Polling Locations

- **Location:** Pontiac City Hall

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### Special Elections

**Elections:**
- **Gubernatorial:**
- **Statewide:**
- **Federal:**

**Date:**
- **General:** November 8th
- **Primary:** August 2nd

### Ballot Measures

- **Flood Control:**
- **Road Projects:**
- **School Bond:**

### Local Issues

- **Sports Authority:**
- **Tax Levy:**
- **Library Bond:**

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## Michigan 2022 General Election

### Offices

- **Governor:**
- **Lieutenant Governor:**
- **Secretary of State:**
- **Treasurer:**
- **Auditor:**

### Seats

- **US Senator:**
- **US Representative:**
- **Michigan Representative:**

### Propositions

- **Proposition A:**
- **Proposition B:**
- **Proposition C:**

### State Proposals

- **Road Projects:**
- **School Bond:**
- **Sports Authority:**

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### Absentee Voting

**Voters:**
- **Total Absentee:**
- **Mail-in:**
- **Fax-in:**

**Polls:**
- **Open:**
- **Closed:**

**Locations:**
- **City Hall:**
- **Library:**

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### Conclusion

The voting worksheet provides a comprehensive overview of the voting process for the Pontiac Precinct 2, including officials, precincts, registered voters, absentee ballots, polling locations, special elections, ballot measures, local issues, and absentee voting details. It is designed to help voters understand the voting process and make informed decisions on election day.
IMPORTANT VOTER INFORMATION FOR FRUITPORT TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

Brian Werschem's

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Supervisor Brian Werschem inherited a four-year general fund deficit of nearly $1,000,000 dollars and a road revolving fund with an $95,000 dollar deficit. The general fund’s “savings account” was so low; the Township borrowed money just to pay its bills until property taxes were collected. This is a fact that can be verified at: http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1751_31038---,00.html

Ron Cooper’s Response to Brian’s Facts!

It would be enlightening for people to go to the web that Brian suggests. You will not find the $1,000,000 and $95,000 amounts because they seem to be made-up figures. You will find that when I left office after the March 2008 audit, Fruitport township’s total fund balance was $1,183,738. This figure speaks for itself as an indicator of the financial health of the township at that time.

If we borrowed for a short term cash flow need, it would be so we would not have to cash in a higher paying interest CD for a short amount of time.

Roads

Since taking office, Brian worked with the Road Commission to obtain grants for road improvements rather than using your tax dollars. He appointed a representative to the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission which distributes Federal road funds throughout North Ottawa and Muskegon Counties. This secured nearly $1,000,000 in funding to completely reconstruct Hile Road (from Airline to Sheridan) and Sheridan (from Heights Ravenna to Hile) at no cost to the Fruitport Township residents, in 2013 and 2014. Brian feels it’s smarter to maintain existing roads with preventative maintenance and resurfacing (Airline, Dangl, Mill Iron, and Brooks) rather than using tax dollars for expansions.

Bike Paths

The new bike paths represent a cost to the Fruitport tax payer and a future liability and only benefit the Commercial areas around the Lakes Mall. Bike paths are an important non-motorized transportation mode; Brian continues to work with the state to connect the north and south bike paths, using Federal and State money at no cost to the Fruitport taxpayer.

Parks

Brian secured $465,000 in grants to construct the new Sheringer soccer park.

Public Utilities

Rather than spend millions of dollars on water and sewer extensions in rural areas where people do not want or request it, Brian focused efforts on maintaining and repairing the existing infrastructure. Spreading water and sewer customer money on expanding the utility systems to rural areas is not fair to the existing customers, exacerbates the potential for urban sprawl, and creates a future liability with very few new

Bike Paths: Brian says that Bike Paths are a future liability and only benefit commercial areas. I believe that they add to safety, health, and a better quality of life and, ideally, every street would have a bike path. As for the north and south connecting bike path, we had between a half million and one million dollars pledged for it. Brian was not interested enough to even look at it, and most of the pledged money was used on bike paths in Ottawa County.

Parks: The Sheringer soccer park land was purchased by trading other land during my administration. The grant Brian claims he secured was done by the Parks Commission and a paid professional grant writer.

Public Utilities - Water: Evidently Brian’s challenge has been to maintain and repair our existing infrastructure. Big deal! Most of our system is less than 50 years old and doesn’t require much to maintain. During my term in office, we maintained and also added 11 extensions to our water trunk lines, most were needed to complete the looping in our master plan, and to remedy the areas of stale water. Previously the water department had to frequently run water into
connections to off-set the costs.

An independent study concluded that Fruitport has the lowest sewer rates in the County which are among the lowest in the State. Our water rates will not go up again due to not spending millions on needless expansions. If residents want water or sewer, the Township will gladly work with them to finance and install it; but only if it is wanted by the residents!

ditches to keep it fresh and safe to drink. Most of those problems were solved with the looping that we did connecting the dead end lines, and it also gave people on those lines the ability to hook up to fresh water. We did it within our budget and no one was forced to hook up if they didn’t want to at the time the line went through. The township purchased some ground at Broadway and Brooks to put a water tower on. Most of the looping that was done will be needed if that tower is built.

Public Utilities - Sewer: I extended sewer lines sized for the entire south half of the township which includes the Mall, Calvary Christian Schools, and the Village. We also put in a sewer line that was not needed at that time, down Sternberg Road from Quarterline to I-96 during the rebuilding of Sternberg Road because it was the least expensive to do at that time. It’s now being used and our sewer rates are still the lowest.

Zoning Enforcement

Brian demands that all zoning ordinances are equally applied to all businesses and residents. No exceptions are given to family members, employees, or friends.

THIS WILL NOT CHANGE!

Lawsuits

Brian ended the lawsuit with the racetrack which was costing too much money with no chance of success. He joined the Norton Shores lawsuit against Muskegon Heights to stop multiple water quality violations and misappropriation of your money. As a result, Muskegon Heights reimbursed hundreds of thousands of dollars and brought the water plant in compliance with Federal and State Health standards.

Summary

Over the past four years, Brian cut unsustainable spending levels by reducing operational costs by over 25%! This was done by eliminating positions, making organizational changes, reducing employee costs, getting out from under the existing water supply contract, and paying off high-interest debt. This has stabilized the general fund which no longer borrows money to pay bills and allowed for an additional detective to follow up on the nearly 7,000 annual calls for service. It is important that Fruitport citizens know the facts relative to these issues rather than misinformation circulated for personal gain. These facts are undisputable and verifiable through independent audits and Township records that are available to you at Fruitport Township Hall and http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1751_31038--,00.html.

We cannot afford to go back to the days of spending beyond our means, nor do we need to.

Lawsuits: The race track lawsuit was not costing the township any money because I personally accepted responsibility for the township's legal expenses. I did that because I felt confident that the township would get a settlement of over $700,000 and did not want to see the township citizens lose that money because of stupid politics. Brian convinced our board to settle it for $10,000.

Brian and the township joined Norton Shores to proceed with a lawsuit that, reading the contract with the Heights, would make you wonder how the judge would rule in the township’s favor, and the township lost.

Summary: It could take pages to refute the false and misleading statements made in Brian’s summary. I doubt that the 25% figure is correct. The 2008 and 2012 audits don’t support this statement. I doubt also if employee costs are less today than four years ago, OR getting out of the existing water supply contract has stabilized the general fund. His facts are disputable and are not verified through the township’s records. Check the website that Brian has offered. It holds the township annual reports and see if you can find his statements true.

We need to go back to compassionate local government – we were not spending beyond our means, but using our resources to benefit the health, safety, and quality of life of our residents.
February 1, 2013

Ron Cooper
4491 E. Pontaluna Road
Fruitport, MI 49415

Dear Mr. Cooper:

This letter concerns the complaint that was recently filed against you by Brian Werschem, which relates to purported violations of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA or Act), 1976 PA 388, MCL 169.201 et seq. The Department of State has received a rebuttal statement from the complainant, a copy of which is enclosed with this letter.

Section 15(10) of the MCFA, MCL 169.215(10), requires the Department to determine within 50 business days from the receipt of the rebuttal statement whether there is a reason to believe that a violation of the Act has occurred. Mr. Werschem’s complaint remains under investigation at this time. At the conclusion of the review, all parties will receive written notice of the outcome of the complaint.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Lori A. Bourbonais
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Brian Werschem
Lori A. Bourbonais  
Bureau of Elections  
Richard H. Austin Building – 1st floor  
430 W. Allegan  
Lansing, MI 48918

January 28th, 2013

Dear Ms. Bourbonais:

I have received and reviewed Mr. Cooper’s response to my complaint. It appears that a rebuttal from me, for the most part, is unnecessary. Mr. Cooper has a warped view of reality, as was the case while he was in office. He is manipulating the issues as he sees fit. Between the laws that govern In-Kind contribution as well as calculating the costs of a campaign my original filing clearly outlines the violations. His response is terribly flawed as we had anticipated. He did provide for a small 200 word free space to all elected officials that most candidates took advantage of. He has outlined that in his filing. His pages of deception and lies go far beyond the small freebies afforded to candidates.

Mr. Cooper knows very well he has been violating campaign finance laws. He has stated in open meetings that people shouldn’t interfere with what he wishes to do. He has done it knowingly for years. He simply has not had anyone willing to file a complaint against him. See Fruitport and Ron Cooper vs. Great Lakes Downs in your records and you will understand the type of man you are dealing with.

The 8 page campaign mailing outlined as Document E cost $1,200 in postage alone (verified by the bulk mail cost for that particular mailer at the post office) plus the printing cost. Though it says on one page, paid for by committee to elect Ron Cooper, he now states it was paid for by his newspaper. Either way, it was a campaign mailer and by itself violates the law. He is changing his position in an attempt to cover up his intentional violations.

I do however wish to respond to Mr. Cooper’s P.S. statements. In both the 2008 and 2012 election cycles, I did receive written endorsements from each of the three unions as well as written endorsements from contractual employees of Fruitport Township. I received those written endorsements at my home and not at Fruitport Township Hall. The employees of Fruitport wanted desperately for the corruption of Mr. Cooper’s reign to end. I have not received any financial support from any of the unions represented at Fruitport Township. That is why it does not appear on my campaign statements. The SEIU Local 517M PAC did, at their expense, send out a support postcard in 2008 that was not part of my campaign committee. It does appear in the PAC’s campaign statements from 2008 on record in your office. Mr. Cooper is simply attempting to cloud his illegal activity by pointing his finger at me. I have religiously filed meticulous campaign statements as required by Michigan Law. My accounts and records are at your disposal.

My committee though will be filing additional complaints against another elected official here that did participate in illegal campaign activity for herself and Mr. Cooper at Fruitport Township Hall, during Township hours. The complaint will come with written statements from myself who witnessed the activity, over half of the staff here in Fruitport who witnessed the activity, as well as written statements from resident voters that witnessed the activity. We were content with assuring that Mr. Cooper was held accountable for his actions but now that he has brought these horribly false accusations to the forefront, we feel it necessary that we assure that all parties follow the laws.

We look forward to your decisions on this matter.

Sincerely,

Brian Werschem – Supervisor Fruitport Charter Township
Lori A. Bourbonais  
Bureau of Elections  
Richard H. Austin Building - 1st Floor  
430 W. Allegan  
Lansing, MI 48918

Re: Complaint against Ron Cooper by Brian Werschem

Dear Ms. Bourbonais:

I would like to respond to some new accusations made by Brian Werschem in his response to my answer to his complaint.

In his second paragraph, I do not believe that I ever made the statement, “that people shouldn’t interfere with what I wish to do,” not even once, in open meetings, closed meetings, or at any other time. I don’t believe I said that in jest, either.

Second paragraph, in any information you may have in regard to Fruitport and Ron Cooper vs. Great Lakes Downs, you will find that I continually tried to combat corruption there and also Great Lakes Downs’ success at beating the township out of money that they were supposed to pay (approximately $1,000,000). They admitted in court that they did not pay according to the correct formula, and Brian agreed to settle the suit for next to nothing. The only reason I can think of is he did not want me to be right. The money lost by the township evidently did not concern him.

In paragraph 4, the township employees supported Brian, not because of corruption on my part because there was none, but because of the hope that they would get what they wanted from Brian.

Last paragraph: Brian evidently thinks he knows who spilled the beans about money being collected on his behalf during working hours, and plans to attack whomever he thinks that is. Brian has no conscious when it comes to hurting people, and will make up one story after another to destroy the credibility and reputation of an individual to achieve his goal. I’ve lived in this community 75 years. His made up stories about me only go so far with people who have known me longer than he has been alive. I am really concerned though, when he threatens to discredit fine younger individuals with possibly less inner strength to deal with his barrage of false accusations. It can be devastating to that person(s). One of the reasons I decided to run against him at the eleventh hour was because other people seemed to be afraid to, especially their wives, for good reason.

Sincerely,

Ron Cooper

P.S. Someone recently reminded me that Brian had large election signs on both sides of his truck and parked it on township property in front of the township hall nearly every day for months before the election. Is that legal? Should the election results be voided because of his actions?
Ron Cooper  
4491 East Pontaluna Road  
Fruitport, Michigan 49415  

Dear Mr. Cooper:

The Department of State (Department) has completed its investigation of a complaint filed against you by Brian Werschem, which alleged that you violated section 33 of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA or Act), 1976 PA 388, MCL 169.233(6), by receiving or spending an amount in excess of $1,000.00 in relation to the 2012 Fruitport Supervisor election and failing to file campaign finance reports in compliance with the Act. This letter concerns the disposition of Mr. Werschem’s complaint.

The MCFA requires a candidate committee that receives or expends more than $1,000.00 during any reporting period to file periodic campaign finance reports in compliance with the Act. MCL 169.233(6). The failure to file a single campaign statement may trigger the assessment of late filing fees, while the failure to file two or more campaign statements is a misdemeanor offense. MCL 169.233(7)-(8).

The Act also requires the Department to “endeavor to correct the violation or prevent a further violation by using informal methods[,]” if it finds that there may be reason to believe that a violation has occurred, and if the Department is unable to correct or prevent additional violations, it may convene an administrative hearing or ask the Attorney General to prosecute if a crime has been committed. MCL 169.215(10). The objective of an information resolution is “to correct the violation or prevent a further violation[,]” Id.

The complaint was filed by Mr. Werschem on December 14, 2012, and you filed a written response on January 15, 2013. Mr. Werschem’s rebuttal statement was filed on January 31, 2013.

Mr. Werschem alleged that although you filed a statement with the Muskegon County Clerk indicating that your candidate committee is eligible for a reporting waiver, your committee received or spent an amount in excess of $1,000.00 in relation to the November 2012 election.

Mr. Werschem provided a list of campaign documents filed with the Muskegon County Clerk by the Ron Cooper for Supervisor committee; a price list for advertisements in the Fruitport Area News; a printout from the Fruitport Area News webpage which lists distribution at approximately 7,600 homes and businesses; the October, 2012 Fruitport Area News, which contained a 4-page insert that stated “Hire (Vote for) Ron Cooper for Fruitport Township Supervisor[,]” and “Please vote in the November 6th election[,]” a mailer that stated “Hire (Vote
Ron Cooper  
April 29, 2013  
Page 2

for) Ron Cooper for Fruitport Township Supervisor [...]” and a large 2-sided flyer which purported to contain “IMPORTANT VOTER INFORMATION FOR FRUITPORT TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR [...]” Mr. Werschem also alleged that you purchased new signs for this campaign, but he did not provide any evidence that would establish this fact.

In response, you stated that you “created and published the Fruitport Area News (FAN) for thirty years as a community service paper [...]” and that “an ad in FAN does not cost [you] anything [...]” You also stated that the extra cost to the paper for 5 different campaign ads that you ran in FAN was $381.41. You further stated that you “don’t pay the same rate for advertising that other advertisers do and they don’t all pay the same rate, either.” You argue that “the fact that [you] were one of the candidates does not change the desire of the paper to accurately inform the voters of the character and abilities of the candidates.” You also stated that you did not purchase any new signs for this campaign, and that you “spent close to nothing” and did not trigger the Act’s reporting requirements.

Expenditure is a term of art which is generally defined, in pertinent part, to include anything of ascertainable monetary value that is used to influence or assist a candidate’s nomination or election. MCL 169.206(1). An in-kind contribution or expenditure means “a contribution or expenditure other than money.” MCL 169.209(3). The campaign statement of a committee must list an in-kind contribution or expenditure at fair market value, and in-kind contributions or expenditures must be listed as both a contribution and an expenditure on a candidate committee’s campaign statement. MCL 169.226(1)(b). Additionally, the definition of a contribution includes “the granting of discounts or rebates not available to the general public [...]” MCL 169.204(2).

As you stated in your answer, because you are the publisher of the Fruitport Area News, you did not pay the normal advertisement fee for the 4-page ad in the October, 2012 edition of the newspaper advocating for your election. However, the ad had an ascertainable monetary value and was used to influence or assist your nomination, and the ad, therefore, constitutes an expenditure. Additionally, the ad went beyond “accurately inform[ing] the voters of the character and abilities of the candidates [...]” as argued in your answer.

When determining whether a written communication is subject to the MCFA, the Department applies the “express advocacy test.” The MCFA provides that a communication that does “not support or oppose a ballot question or candidate by name or clear inference” is not subject to the requirements and limitations of the MCFA. MCL 169.206(2)(b). A communication that expressly supports or opposes a candidate contains words such as “vote for,” “vote against,” “support,” “defeat,” or equivalent words or phrases. The four-page ad in the October, 2012 edition of the Fruitport Area News specifically urged voters to “Hire (Vote for) Ron Cooper for Fruitport Township Supervisor [...]” placing the ad squarely within the ambit of the Act.

To determine the cost of an ad that must be reported on a campaign statement, we look to the actual fair market value of the ad, not the actual extra cost to the newspaper for the ad to run. MCL 169.226(1)(b). According to the Fruitport Area News advertisement rate schedule, the full-page rate for an ad is $825.00. The four-page ad in the October, 2012 edition of the Fruitport Area News put your committee well over the $1,000.00 reporting waiver threshold.

Additionally, it appears that the committee made expenditures for the 8-page mailer which also stated “Hire (Vote For) Ron Cooper for Fruitport Township Supervisor [...]” You indicated in
your answer that the total printing and mailing costs of this mailer were $1,831.17. Contrary to your argument that only one page of the mailer constitutes an “ad” and the cost should be divided by 8, the express advocacy contained in the mailer subjects the entire mailer to the reporting requirements of the Act. The cost of this mailer also puts the committee over the $1,000.00 reporting waiver threshold.

The Department does note, however, that it has determined that the large 2-sided flyer which purported to contain “IMPORTANT VOTER INFORMATION FOR FRUITPORT TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR” did not contain words such as “vote for,” “vote against,” “support,” “defeat,” or equivalent words or phrases and, therefore, did not contain express advocacy, and it does not fall under the reporting requirements of the MCFA.

Based upon the evidence submitted, the Department finds that there is reason to believe that your committee surpassed the $1,000.00 reporting waiver threshold and violated section 33 of the MCFA by failing to file, at a minimum, a pre-election statement for the November 2012 election. It is also possible that the committee also owes a post-election statement for the November 2012 election, depending upon the timing of the expenditures for the 8-page mailer. Upon making this determination, the Department is required by law to attempt to resolve the matter informally. MCL 169.215(10).

You must file the appropriate statement(s) with the Muskegon County Clerk on or before May 20, 2013. Please provide the Department with a copy of the statement(s), along with a receipt from the filing official stating that each statement has been filed. After its review of the statement(s), the Department will then determine how to proceed with enforcement.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Lori Bourbonais
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Brian Werschem