

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GROSSE POINTE  
VOTER GUIDE for the HARPER WOODS  
MAYORAL AND CITY COUNCIL ELECTION  
ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2009  
POLLS OPEN FROM 7:00 AM UNTIL 8:00 PM  
FOR INFORMATION ON YOUR POLLING LOCATION, CALL YOUR CITY CLERK OR GO TO  
THE WEBSITE [www.harperwoodscity.org](http://www.harperwoodscity.org)**

The League of Women Voters of Grosse Pointe (LWVGP) is a nonpartisan national organization whose purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The LWVGP does not endorse or oppose candidates or parties; but it does work to obtain and distribute information on candidates and their views to the public.

We have posted the candidate responses gathered from the candidates for the Harper Woods Offices of Mayor and City Council

There are two candidates for a two-year term for mayor. There are six candidates for three open seats for the four-year city council.

Mayoral Candidates:

Kenneth A. Poynter (Incumbent)  
Anthony Wimbrush

City Council Candidates:

Jason J. Frattini  
Jeffrey R. Marcel  
Veronica Paiz  
Daniel S. Palmer (Incumbent)  
Vivian M. Sawicki (Incumbent)  
John M. Szymanski (Incumbent)

We have asked the candidates running for Harper Woods Mayor and City Council to complete the following questions. *Their responses have not been changed.*

Biographical profile: 80-word limit. Include the highest level of education attained, occupation, work experience, length of time in the community, special qualifications you bring to the position you seek, etc.

Questions:

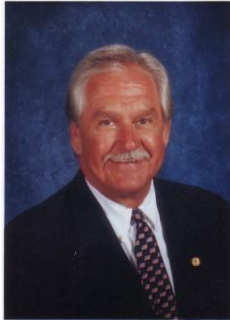
1. What is your view of the issues related to combining police and fire fighters into one public service department?
2. With even less financial support coming from the state and from lowered property values/taxes, where can cuts be made and how will they impact the quality of the service provided?
3. In your opinion, what are the top three (3) issues the City of Harper Woods faces? What is your position on each of them?

The candidates responded; their answers to the questions posed are as follows:

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## **MAYORAL CANDIDATES**

### **KENNETH A. POYNTER**



Lifetime commitment to Harper Woods. Parents moved to Harper Woods(Gratiot Township) in 1940. Harper Woods High School graduate. University degrees from Valparaiso, Purdue, Wayne State. Harper Woods School Board, 1982-1997(either President or Vice-President for 11 years). Active in clubs and events throughout Harper Woods. Mayor since 1997. Donates entire mayor salary to high school scholarships. Current public school educator(over 40 years). Son is public high school teacher and coach.

#### **1. What is your view of the issues related to combining police and fire fighters into one public service department?**

Intent is to maintain separate police and fire departments and to create an additional public safety department consisting of cross-trained officers. Those who did not want to cross-train were guaranteed they would not be laid-off. This is cost-effective. Fifteen officers were cross-trained at a total cost of \$65,000(cost to hire one additional fireman would approximate \$70,000 including beginning salary and benefits). These officers underwent the same training at the fire academy as firemen have. With a public safety division, more officers would be placed on the streets.

#### **2. With even less financial support coming from the State and from lowered property values/taxes, where can cuts be made and how will they impact the quality of the services provided?**

Cuts can be made through attrition, elimination of positions, and combining of departments as the opportunity arises. During my tenure as mayor there has never been anyone laid-off. Structural changes in the city budget may have to be made. Intent is to keep city services at their present efficient level. Must always attempt to make citizens feel safe and secure in their surroundings. Safety must always be a top priority. Special attention must always be given to the needs of youth and senior citizens.

#### **3. In your opinion, what are the top three (3) issues the City of Harper Woods faces? What is your position on each of these issues?**

Top three issues are: 1) Maintaining a safe, clean city 2) Financial uncertainties of the future such as loss of state revenue sharing and skyrocketing health care costs for employees 3) Declining property values and the loss of property tax revenues.

My position on each of these issues is essentially the same. Careful monitoring of the budget, no increase in taxes, and always thinking in terms of what is best for the city and not for a particular department. Must be innovative, creative, and not be resistant to structural change. Must stop denying the reality of today's economy.

## **ANTHONEY WIMBUSH**

B.S. Criminal Justice and Philosophy, Siena Heights College.  
Management and good with people.

**1. What is your view of the issues related to combining police and fire fighters into one public service department?**

I'm against combination of both departments.

**2. With even less financial support coming from the State and from lowered property values/taxes, where can cuts be made and how will they impact the quality of the services provided?**

Looking at the budget we can choose what departments to cut.

**3. In your opinion, what are the top three (3) issues the City of Harper Woods faces? What is your position on each of these issues?**

BUDGET, REVENUE, TAX BASE . Look at the Budget to see how we can save more.  
Revenue - we need to bring money back into the community by thinking outside the boxes.  
Tax Base – we need to give tax breaks to new businesses.

## **CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES**

### **Jason J. Frattini**

I am a 9 year resident of Harper Woods, who is a Firefighter/Paramedic for a neighboring community. I am married with twin 6 year old boys, who are active in Cub Scouts. I received an Associates of Applied Science in Fire Technology from Schoolcraft College, and have worked in the Fire and EMS service for over 15 years. I will bring experience in Public Service to the Council table and look forward to serving the citizens of Harper Woods.

**Questions:**

**1. What is your view of the issues related to combining police and fire fighters into one public service department?**

I'm unsure how this plan will provide the necessary fire and paramedic services to our residents. It's unclear if it will comply with our current mutual aid agreements. This is a community issue, not a police vs. fire issue. We need to be prepared to handle ALL emergencies. There are better ways to utilize our current services to provide for the safety and security of our residents without putting their health and property at risk.

**2. With even less financial support coming from the State and from lowered property values/taxes, where can cuts be made and how will they impact the quality of the services provided?**

We need to look at the current structure of all of our city departments to see how to best utilize our employees. Tough decisions need to be made. Some programs may have to be cut or scaled back. Safety and security of residents must be our #1 priority. We need to put the resident's needs above the employees needs.

**3. In your opinion, what are the top three (3) issues the City of Harper Woods faces? What is your position on each of these issues?**

Crime. We need to stop reacting to crime and start preventing it. That will take a community effort. But the community is not going to get involved until we start listening.

Communication with Residents. This isn't about what I want. It's about what you want. It's your city. We need to listen to what you want and find a way to get it.

Fiscal Responsibility. For too long, this city has operated as "business as usual." That needs to stop. We need to put the residents first.

## Jeffrey R. Marcel

Jeffrey Richard Marcel a Harper Woods citizen for life (42 years).

Family participated in many organizations and involved with departments that made our city great.

Divorced father and I have 3 children that are 11 years old and under.

Graduated Detroit College of Business - Bachelors of Business of Administration in Computer Information Systems

Currently work for G-Tech Professional Staffing on my 12<sup>th</sup> year at Chrysler HQ.

Project Manager responsible for multiple projects that require strict budget and timing constraints.

### Questions:

#### **1. What is your view of the issues related to combining police and fire fighters into one public service department?**

With need for budget cuts due to the economy and lower tax base, many services and departments are sure to be affected. We need to make sure that the Police and Fire Departments are not negatively impacted. With the recent degradation of our city's real estate, we need to ensure that the public safety departments remain strong and effective. We need to quit wasting time and resources fighting a 20-year battle over merging the Police and Fire departments and come up with a different solution. Such as the proper handling of budgeted funds by efficiently redistributing, allocating and cutting into other budgets and, or by, investigating potential revenue generating services needed by citizens. I am sure we can overcome this issue with the right plan and vision.

#### **2. With even less financial support coming from the State and from lowered property values/taxes, where can cuts be made and how will they impact the quality of the services provided?**

Recently, Michigan's economic crisis and increased unemployment have caused extensive home foreclosures in our community, resulting in Harper Woods seeing a huge increase in home vacancies and code violations. These issues are crushing our tax base and our reputation as a great little city in which to live. I know our code enforcement team is issuing hundreds of violations, but in many cases that is not enough. It's not enough because of underlying issues that prevent the homes from getting maintained, like elderly residents who don't have the physical means to maintain the homes, or those who have employment issues and cannot afford to pay the current exorbitant rates, as well as the residents whose homes are getting foreclosed on so they no longer have an interest in the home. Just issuing more violations is not going to solve this problem. It will point out the areas of concern, but then we, as a council, will have to decide a better way to consolidate and address these underlying issues. Addressing these issues and cleaning up our city will surely increase residency and in turn set the tax base back to a sustainable level.

#### **3. In your opinion, what are the top three (3) issues the City of Harper Woods faces? What is your position on each of these issues?**

##### **Emergency Services - Police, Fire & EMS**

Regardless of whether we have a one Public Service Department or not, the police

presence in our city needs to increase. And the Fire & EMS services need to be staffed at safe working levels. Both departments are currently understaffed and many citizens are concerned for their safety. We need to reinstate the police decoy20cars (with cameras running) and increase patrols, whether by car or foot/bicycle. The installation of city surveillance cameras, cul-de-sacs, and street barricades are known crime deterrents and need to be further investigated and implemented. A visual presence and the fear of getting caught or filmed will surely reduce crime levels.

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

A balanced budget takes a lot of work and creativity in these trying economic times. Every dollar spent needs to be accounted for and reviewed and not just stamped for approval because someone says so. Budgets need to be reviewed down to the line item and only approved for good, economical and smart budget sense reasons. Inter-departmental communication and coordination is a must. We need to listen to our city employees and not discard their ideas and concerns on how to save money and cut budgets.

Many local businesses are hurting because of the downturn in the economy and need to be supported as well. We are losing businesses as well as residences and whenever possible, we need to utilize local businesses and services before turning elsewhere. If we do not keep a good ratio of businesses to residency, we are sure to fail.

### **DPW**

City appearance/attractiveness needs to be increased and reviewed continuously. We need to focus on the code violation corrections and assisting to clean and maintain the city's appearance. By being creative or by utilizing existing, under utilized resources, we can assure that these factors do not get out of hand. These resources are not necessarily DPW employees, but may be pulled from other areas or organizations to assist.

## **Veronica Paiz**

Ten year resident. Married. Member, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Freelance artist/writer/photographer/cultural arts consultant. Masters degree, New York University. Work experiences: Executive Director, Detroit cultural center; Focus: HOPE; Detroit Public TV. New York State sub teaching certificate. Former member IBEW and NY State United Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO. Volunteer experiences: Lupus patient counseling; NYC hospital emergency room; greyhound rescue. Personal qualities: versatile, communicative, diligent. Will bring Council diversity, fresh perspectives, and commitment to maintaining City services and values.

### **Questions:**

#### **1. What is your view of the issues related to combining police and fire fighters into one public service department?**

I have conflicted feelings about a combined service department. However, I have definite disagreements with the way our Council has handled the issue. Public safety was voted down in the early 1990s. Council ignored the voters and the City Charter, which mandates separate departments. Their actions have cost the City a lost law suit, monies for cross-training police and their equipment, as well as a pay increase for our police that must now be renegotiated. I believe we need to follow the decisions of our voters or change the City Charter; not ignore both, as our current Council has done.

#### **2. With even less financial support coming from the State and from lowered property values/taxes, where can cuts be made and how will they impact the quality of the services provided?**

Cuts will negatively impact services provided; over the next two years, City services will suffer. With even less support from the State and Federal government, Michigan cities have only their own resources to depend on. Harper Woods citizens are a great resource for our City. We can

form volunteer groups to assist in areas requiring minimal training, re-evaluate our style of generating revenue beyond traditional grant writing opportunities, and review fees/taxes for home rental incomes. Council can show support by taking a pay cut. All services for children, including Parks and Recreation, must stay intact.

**3. In your opinion, what are the top three (3) issues the City of Harper Woods faces? What is your position on each of these issues?**

I believe the top 3 issues in Harper Woods are 1) Public Safety, 2) Crime, and 3) maintaining City services.

My answer to Questions One and Two, above, best explain my position on issues of Public Safety and City Services. Regarding crime, my opinion is that we are in need of being creative and innovative in our approach to crime. Our Police do their best, but we need to look to additional and diverse resources, including urban planning directives and zoning, ordinances/laws, implementing more effective pedestrian and automotive pathways, and anti-crime workshops for our residents.

## **Daniel S. Palmer**



I have resided in Harper Woods with my wife Bonnie and our 4 children since 1997.

I am a graduate of the University of Michigan and Wayne State Law School and have been a licensed attorney for over 19 years.

I have been a member of the Harper Woods City Council since 2001.

I am running for re-election because it is very important that our city has experienced leadership as it faces the challenges posed by Michigan's economy.

### **Questions:**

**1. What is your view of the issues related to combining police and fire fighters into one public service department?**

The City Council voted to create a Department of Public Safety to function alongside the police and fire departments. So far 15 police officers have voluntarily completed fire academy training and would be eligible to assist the ranks of our fire department, much as public safety officers from the Grosse Pointes have assisted our Harper Woods firefighters at fire scenes for years. In my opinion, this is not inconsistent with the City Charter and would help to alleviate some of the rising operational costs facing the city, namely excessive overtime.

Implemented more fully, it would also lead to a greater police presence on the streets, which would definitely be beneficial. At this time, a Court Order prevents us from further implementing this plan, but we have appealed this decision.

**2. With even less financial support coming from the State and from lowered property values/taxes, where can cuts be made and how will they impact the quality of the services provided?**

Currently, the primary goal of the City Council is to preserve the excellent city services that our residents have come to expect through these very trying economic times. Structural changes will have to be made due to lower tax revenue and less assistance from state government. The

administration has done a good job on keeping operating costs down. However city government will have to look at ways to deliver services differently. One major effort has been the creation of the public safety department. Carried through this will create significant savings. The city continues its efforts to accomplish this either through collective bargaining or through the court system. This will not only be a cost savings but will lead to better police and fire services.

**3. In your opinion, what are the top three (3) issues the City of Harper Woods faces? What is your position on each of these issues?**

Deliver excellent city services while thinking of new ways to deliver these services to save money. I have been involved in the current council's efforts to accomplish this and we are making progress.

Re-electing the current city council and mayor will put Harper Woods in the best position to make significant gains in this area.

Preserve the programs that make Harper Woods a special place for all its residents. These include a strong Parks and Recreation department, library services, services for our elderly residents. I have been a participant in the parks and rec department through the years and a strong supporter of the library and services for our elderly. The best way we can assure these continue to thrive is by being smart about how we deliver services in the most efficient and economical manner.

In these trying economic times with increased foreclosures we need to continue to enforce our city ordinances so that our property remains attractive. I have been and will continue to be a supporter of tight enforcement of these ordinances, with a view toward adopting additional ordinance provisions that make sense for our community.

## **Vivian M. Sawicki**



Vivian M. Sawicki, 52, homeowner 22 years, teaches full time at Regina High School and coaches forensic speech events. Married to Michael with three children who attended Beacon and Tyrone schools. A former Girl Scout leader and substitute teacher in Harper Woods district, Mrs. Sawicki graduated Magna Cum Laude from University of Detroit and earned post degree credits at Wayne State University. Serves on Beautification Commission, Ordinance Committee, and was liaison to Harper Woods - Grosse Pointe Futuring Committee.

### **Questions:**

**1. What is your view of the issues related to combining police and fire fighters into one public service department?**

The question is misleading. Our intention is **not** to create one department, but to add a division of cross-trained individuals **willing** to serve as police officers and fire fighters. Right now we have 14 fully trained police-fire officers who could help. HW can't afford new officers but crime isn't going down. 32 Michigan communities use some form of public safety officers – they would help answer some of the 32,000 calls our PD receives. Safety is our number one concern.

**2. With even less financial support coming from the State and from lowered property values/taxes, where can cuts be made and how will they impact the quality of the services provided?**

Our council has always been committed to great city services and we don't intend to lose them. Services are the backbone of a community. I believe we will need to gain concessions on health care and other costs, possibly combining departments where possible, or outsourcing services if it will save money. Cities aren't permitted to operate like business by mandating change, but renegotiating contracts may be necessary. We have some hard choices ahead; residents need council to make good decisions.

**3. In your opinion, what are the top three (3) issues the City of Harper Woods faces? What is your position on each of these issues?**

**Keeping residents and properties safe** is number one. That means getting more police on the street any way we can, encouraging residents to call about suspicious activity, and problem properties. Also making sure that fire and ambulance services will continue to be excellent. It is our city and we need to protect it. **Finding alternate sources of income and trimming budget losses** by working smart and seeking out all avenues for income and for cutting costs. **Maintaining exceptional services** (above).

## **John M. Szymanski**



Current Elected City Councilmember, City resident/homeowner since 1979, Married (32) years with two children, B.A. Degree in Accounting C.P.P, Chief of Payroll Operations/Wayne County Government, former PTO School Board member, served on numerous Harper Woods Boards and Commissions over the past (14) years. Confirmed appointment of innovative City Department Heads. Paid professional experience in Labor Relations, Union Arbitrations, Finance and Public Budget Administration. Strong on Police issues and government finances. Have balanced (13) budgets for the City of Harper Woods.

**Questions:**

**1. What is your view of the issues related to combining police and fire fighters into one public service department?**

This reform is long overdue but difficult to understand. It will save lots of money when implemented and increase police visibility in the community by allowing a more flexible use of the "idle" manpower in both the Police and Fire Department(s). It also greatly reduces "overtime" pay in both the Police & Fire department by normalizing working hours and certain staffing requirements as mandated by the State of Michigan. The City Manager, Police and Fire Chief and Mayor and City Council favor this plan.

**2. With even less financial support coming from the state and from lowered property values/taxes, where can cuts be made and how will they impact the quality of the services provided?**

Rather than “cuts” we are looking at efficiencies for all city departments in the upcoming budget. Perhaps taking the role of “administrator” as opposed to “provider” for some of the services we now offer, and combining related departments and personnel where possible, will go a long way in providing our residents with the same level of services they now enjoy.

**3. In your opinion, what are the three (3) issues the City of Harper Woods faces? What is your position on each of these issues?**

**Hiring more Police Officers.**

The current crime level in our city is just unacceptable. We are experiencing not only crimes of property, but crimes of assault. The condition of the Michigan economy and the lack of sufficient police patrols in our city are putting residents, businesses and property in harms way. If elected, our council team will tackle this problem immediately.

**Make the necessary permanent structural changes in our City Budget:**

Quite frankly, matching expenses against future revenues. The automotive industry is not going to give us the “lift” it always has done in the past. The challenge will be to give residents all of the services they now enjoy with less tax dollars to pay for them.

**Let city businesses know we are on their side:**

**No tax increases... period!** Provide the necessary city support services. Keeping streets/sidewalks repaired, excellent snow & ice control, adequate police/fire protection and appealing streetscapes. Using our new community college to partner with businesses to provide residents with new “clean technology” jobs in our area.